E. vii. 72.

Chymia Cœlestis.

DROPS FROM HEAVEN;

OR,

PIOUS MEDITATIONS AND PRAYERS

On several places of Scripture.

By *Ben. Parry*, D.D.

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To His Highly Honoured Friend
WILLIAM GLYNNE Esq;
Dear Sir,

Ive me leave to present you with a few Meditations, which owe their birth to that place wherein your Honourable Father received his; and therefore by a kind of Alliance may seem to challenge your acceptance. The solemn retirements of those silent walks, gave life to these thoughts; which now under your name dare shew themselves abroad, and from the society of Groves and Ecchoes take the liberty of a

more open view: they are not that which the world uſually calls by the name of ſtudy (though heaven cannot be too much ſtudied on) but the exerciſe only of a few ſpare thoughts ſometimes, on a pious ſubject; a tribute, which no godly mind can pay too often. And I was the more ambitious, they ſhould receive the honour of their Dedication from your hand as being ſo well acquainted with your vertue, and the nobleneſs of your ſpirit; which

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is already become its own Herauld, beyond the loudeſt Encomium my pen can give. Let Philoſophers count the orbs and reckon up the ſtars, none can ſpeak ſo feelingly of Heaven as he that loves it beſt. Of all Knowledge, experimental is the nobleſt; and of all Meditation, that which informs not only the mind, but the manners too. The end of Divine contemplation is reformation and he is but a dry Chriſtian whoſe life conſiſts more in ſpeculation than in

practice: and though I am no Preacher, yet I hope, without putting me to the trouble of a Complemental excuſe for being in print, you will pardon my ambition, if, deſirous to acknowledg my engagements to your Noble Relations (as a teſtimony of my reſpects to your ſelf) I have made choice of this, having no other way to manifeſt how much I deſire to be eſteemed,

SIR,

Your affectionate Servant.

BEN. PARRY.

The

The Epiſtle to the READER.

READER,

Erhaps the Title may Invite thy Eye, though the meanneſs of the Comment may not merit thy Peruſal. They are indeed the experiments of but a very young *pen, though the ſubjects are ſo divine, they would find work enough for the Graveſt in that Profeſſion. And they have ſo little of any affected or elaborate Curioſity, that I need not tell thee, They are only the ſudden effuſions of a few pious minutes in my vacancies from other ſtudies. And who can Imploy his thoughts better at any time?*

And therefore I took no other pains than not to breathe them to the Air only, but ſome noble Con-

ſervator *that might recall my thoughts; and put me in mind again of that which ſo equally concerns all* Eternity.

If you wonder at their haſty ambition of being in Print. It was not indeed the Requeſt *of* Friends, *or any ſuch thred-bare motive, that* ſtole *them out. I knew not well what elſe to do with them, and therefore thought it as good to let them be loſt in the World as in my Trunck: And though I am not ſo confident, as to think they are ſo good as to merit thy Applauſe; yet I hope they are not ſo bad, but they may be worth the Reading.*

Farewell.

John Clark

Farewell Chymia

Medea

Chymia Cœleſtis.

Drops from Heaven;

OR,

Pious Meditations and PRAYERS.

ECCLES. chap. 12. v. 1.

Remember now thy Creatour in the days of thy youth.

Remember thy Creatour, &c. It is one of the beſt expreſſions in the Preachers Sermon: For who knows whether he ſhall live to be old? And yet that voice which ſpeaks ſo loudly

to the whole World, and ſtill will tell the end thereof, is ſcarce audible in the ears of many. 'Tis one of this Divine Singers moſt harmonious Leſſons; and yet the World is not pleas'd with the *tune*: Strange! that the ſweeteſt of Preachers ſhould have ſo few followers being his oratory is ſo Divine: and yet it is a Text, which though they will neither hear nor read, they cannot chuſe but ſee; for the whole world is but a Comment on it: Every creature we do but look on, preaches this Doctrine, which we can ſo careleſly ſleep out, with our eyes open. Nature carries this Memento in her forehead; the very Brutes in this can reaſon with us; and it is ſtrange that Man ſhould *forget* his *Maker*, did he but *remember himſelf*: But alas, youth loves not to be put in mind of Heaven, 'twould ſpoyl his memory, and make him think of his Prayers too often. Piety, will but dull his blood, Religion makes him look old; the thoughts of

of Heaven, and another World will make him graver then becomes his years, his blood tells him he is not yet in a temper to turn Divine, he may ſerve God time enough, when he can do nothing elſe; Thus theſe earthly objects of Pleaſure hurrie away our thoughts from Heaven and its purer Joys; we can ſpend the beauty of our years in vice, and think to pleaſe God well enough with the deformities of age: we can revell our piety and time away in vain delights, and think our ſelves ſtrong enough to force Heaven, and become religious when we are wither'd with infirmities,. and have nothing left us but *repentance* and a *tomb*. We are ſo well pleaſed with the ſweetneſs of ſenſe, that we are careleſs of any other felicity; and ſo much delighted with the happineſs of ſinning *freely*, that we could willingly be of that Religion which tolerates vice moſt. We place our devotion with the Epicure in the riots of Nature, ſportful meetings

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are our religious Exerciſes, a Sermon is as troubleſome as a Funeral to us; to hear of our end amidſt our pleaſure ſounds like a death's Lecture, the unwelcome eccho of the Grave. Let the Preacher leſſon us never ſo well, to remember our Maker, we had rather follow Satans doctrine to enjoy the World as long as we can, and think of Heaven at our leiſure.

And ſhall the luſts of the World, O Lord, be greater in my Soul than the Love of thee? ſhall the temporary delights of ſin drown the memory of thy glory? My Life is but a Span, and yet I beſeech thee ſhorten that rather than it ſhould be ſpent in a neglect of Thee: better this Earthly *tabernacle* ſhould be diſſolved, than become a *Theatre* for ſin to revel in; Let me pay Nature the debt I owe her, ſooner than perhaps ſhe would call for it, rather than run in ſcore with thy Juſtice: 'tis better I ſhould die and be loſt in the memory of the World, than forget Thee: Thou brought-

broughteſt me from nothing, not to *ſin*, but to *ſerve* thee, and haſt imprinted in me a ray of Thy ſelf, that I might not ſeek *mine* own, but *Thy* Will, nor purſue the World but Heaven; make me therefore to ſee the ſolid and raviſhing conſolation that is in ſerving thee; what Joy accompanies thy grace, that ſo I may no longer follow my *ſenſe* but my *Saviour*. It is none of the leaſt ſins of our youth that we are careleſs and forgetful of Thee our Creatour: and no wonder we are ſo inſenſible of the Joyes to come, that live in ſuch a conſtant and continued neglect of Heaven.

Make me therefore, O my God, to conſider, that had I the fruition of all that I can wiſh, or long for here, I ſhould not onely not be ſatisfied but in the end find how miſerable he is that ſetteth his heart on any thing but thy ſelf: teach me therefore ſo to enjoy the world that I loſe not thee, nor the memory of that Bleſſed reward thou

haſt

haſt promiſed to them that Honour Thee.

GEN. Chap. 2. v. 8.

And the Lord God planted a Garden Eaſt-ward in Eden.

WHat an *airy fancy* was it of ſome then, to place Paradice beyond the *middle* region? could they tranſplant the earth at pleaſure? or did the clouds, like ſo many moving walks, become a ſeminary of vegetables? Was *Eraſmus* of this opinion when he wiſht himſelf encaged betwixt heaven and earth? How vain is ambitious frailty in its queſt after knowledge! We ſearch for Paradice with more *Curioſity* than *Adam loſt* it: and when we cannot find it here, yet we will *fancy* it a place, though above our reach. That there was a Paradice, we need not doubt; He that made it tells us ſo: but where to find it,

it, he that *loſt* it, *knows not.* So ſuddenly doth *ſin* blaſt our moſt innocent pleaſures. Scarce had Man taken a view or walk in Paradice, but this expell'd him: the earth was but in its youth, ſcarce warm'd by the new *born* Sun, when this wither'd it into a *ſterill* and decrepit *Complexion*: nay the heavens, ſcarce ſeated in their orbs, were ſhaken by it, and interrupted almoſt in their Motions by the *pride* and *fall* of Angels. No ſooner had the Serpent breath'd out his Contagion, but Paradice chang'd its *verdure.* The Creatures fly from the Garden of the world; and infected Man is ſhut out from his beautifull encloſure: he that was an Inhabitant of pleaſure it ſelf, for whom the moſt choice and various fragrancies of the New Created earth were epitomized together, is *ſtript* and cheated of his *happineſs* by the *Spirit* of *lies*, and is glad to be beholding to a *Figtree* for his firſt *veſtment.* How perfectly hath his *naked Iſſue* inherited

ted his fortune? how many of his wretched ſons have been ever ſince ſelling their *Paradice* for an *Apple*? How does the covetous wretch adore his Mammon, his yellow God, and Coins heaven and his *Salvation* into *Money*, though the *ſtamp* be Hell, or the image of the *beaſt*? how readily will ambition Court Hell it ſelf to ſerve his intereſt, make no ſcruple to ſell his Soul for a Glorious vanity, and worſhip Satan for a kingdome? how does the *Senſualiſt* make his life an *enterlude*, leaving Paradice for *Tantalus* his Garden, and makes *wantonneſs* his *heaven*, pleaſure his Divinity, and never thinks of a better or another life, but when he is in danger of loſing *this*? How many *upſtart* lights hath *Satan* ſprung to *darken* Religion, and eclipſe the Goſpel? how many eyes hath he put out by opening; pretending to cloath us with more Knowledge and Sanctity, that he might diſmantle us of heaven and happineſs? I had rather be for

ever

ever blind than uſe an eye-ſalve of the Devils preſcribing; and be for ever ignorant than learn Satans leſſon, to belie heaven and diſtruſt my Maker.

So miſerable hath ſin made us, O Lord, that by it we have loſt not only Paradice but heaven too; forfeited not only the pleaſures of this *life*, but alſo the joys to come, and with the true Comforts of the world are ſhipt of thy favour too. He whom thou madeſt the *Monarch* of the Creatures, groans under the *bondage of ſin*; and by the Miſery of his crimes, hath cancell'd almoſt the glory and miracles of thy work. And now might we have been extinguiſh'd in our guilt, had not He, who is the brightneſs of thy Glory dropt a new life into our eclipſed natures by the power of his Blood and Merits; and, by reconciling us to thy ſelf, given us an admiſſion to better and more enduring pleaſures. Grant therefore that having obtained mercy, we may walk

walk accordingly; that being *bought* for heaven, we may no more *ſell* our ſelves to ſin, nor vainly prefer a few moments of pleaſure before an eternity of joy; that ſo, when our ſouls ſhall expire with our breath, they may be tranſplanted to that Paradice that never fades, and enjoy the pleaſures of eternity in the boſome of thy Glory.

1 King. Chap. 10. v. 18.

Moreover the King made a great Throne of Ivory, and overlay'd it with the beſt Gold.

'TWas fit that the beſt of Kings ſhould be ſuitably ſerv'd; and now he ſees himſelf in ſo glorious a condition, he need not repent of that happy and eternal *election* he made in *Gibeon*: where amongſt all his Sacrafices there was none ſo pleaſing as that which he made *of himſelf* to the diſpoſal of his God. Did the Princes of

of the world but make *Solomon* their *Pattern*, they might participate of *his fortune*, and find a more Glorious Hand ſupporting their Scepters, beyond the reach of the moſt admired *Achitophel*. 'Tis not the paint but the Piety of a Throne that both ſecures and adorns it. He muſt needs be the *greateſt* of Princes whom God *Crowns*; the *richeſt* Monarch, that, beſides the enjoyments of the world, receives even a *Treaſure* from heaven. Piety never went unrewarded. God can beſtow on his, as well the felicities of this life, as that which is hereafter. But if Solomon *bow down* to *Harlots*, his *Crown muſt fall*; and if he forſakes God, ſin *dethrones* him. Greatneſs cannot priviledge from puniſhment, nor the *eminency* of a Throne excuſe the *guilt* thereof. He that *breath'd* out ſo many Divine Songs, is ſtruck *dumb* at the airs of a female tongue, and thoſe Ivory ſteps the ſeat of Honour grow *black* with ſin. Had his Guard of Lyons proved

true,

true, they would have quickly dismembred those *Syrens*, that having lost their vertue had nothing but their *vices* left to charm their *furies* with. *Solomons* youthfulness in his old *age*, præcipitated him the sooner to his *end*, the end both of his *life* and *Glory*.

O Lord, if Solomon's *Throne* was so glorious, how infinitely transcendent must *Thine* be, from whom *Solomon received his: that* under which the pillars of the earth tremble, and in comparison of which the lustre of the heavens is but a *spark*. Though thou hast many thrones, yet the most glorious one is that of thy *Mercy*, which thou art pleas'd to open to the penitent Sinner. I will look upon the glittering guilded eminencies of the world with more delight, because I see the foot-steps of thy Glory in them: and the royalties of the earth shall make me but with the greater reflection aspire after the enjoyment of

that *Throne*, whoſe *beauty* and *holineſs* raviſhes the *Seraphick Attendants* with *joy* unſpeakable and full of Glory.

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1 King. ch. 19. v. 9.

And he came thither unto a Cave and lodged there.

SEe how malice hath forced *Elijah* to a Cave, and he that could not have the Liberty either of *Life* or *Conſcience* amongſt the Children of his People, was glad to find out a narrower Incloſure to ſave *both*. The *Prophet* that ſpake ſo many Wonders is for the time become an *Hermite*; 'twas but a kind of a *type* and *prælu-dium* of after-Ages. For, when, through him, I look on thoſe famous Votaries of the Church, who, to overcome the World relinquiſht it, turning Caves into Oratories, Caverns into Chappels, and filling the hollowneſs

hollowneſs of a ſilent Grot, with di viner Ecchoes, than nature knew I cannot chuſe but admire the purit of that zeal, which made ſolitude it mirth and the freedome of a melan cholly devotion the only object o their Glory; ſequeſtring themſelve from men that they might be fitte companions for Angels; and leavin all other Imployments that the might exerciſe their Graces: Thei divine Retirers put Satan to the trou ble of coming out of his way t tempt them; and ſo well obey'd thei Maſters rule, *Faſt and pray*, tha their whole Lives were a *Lent*. Whe they could not die, they liv'd hi *Martyrs*.

If theſe Pious Exiles, whoſe Ver tue hath more *Praiſes* than *Practice* (men *loving* now the World too wel to *leave* it) have by ſo noble a Con finement made their *memory* as ſacre as their *Lives*. How great a miracl muſt he be, that lives a religious an devout recluſe among the croud o *ſinners*

ſinners? and when the objects of the World face him, Conquers more nobly, by oppoſing than retreating? He was a true Souldier that *ſpatt* his tongue into the Harlots face, leſt it ſhould comply with the wantonneſs of hers; and taught his Bloud by nobler motions to obey his Vertue, not his Nature. And he is the divine Hermit, who by not loving the World leaves it, whilſt he lives in it: and excluding himſelf more from the ſin than the ſociety of men, ſhews, he would not be beholding to ſolitude for the Glory his Vertue can acquire. Happy he, that by thus enjoying, both Conquers, and Deſerts the World, and makes his way to felicity through thoſe Sirens that Salute him!

O My Saviour, if I cannot follow Thee in the Wilderneſs, yet I will Worſhip thee in the Garden, where thoſe Divine accents of thy Voice thrice ſubdued thy Murtherers.

Teach

Teach me to conform my ſelf to that life which hath ſo aſtoniſh'd the World, thoſe ſufferings that made the higheſt Horrour a pleaſure, and the loſs of life a Satisfaction in ſaving mine. Thou haſt taught me that the nobleſt way to Conquer, is in the midſt of Enemies.

Job ch. 11. v. 10.

In all this did not Job ſin with his lips.

BEhold this Miracle of patience from whom Hell it ſelf could not extort one miſ-becomming accent! One that could turn his ſighs into Muſick, breathe Divinity in Groans, and Conquer Satan in his tortures, that could turn his Sorrows into Sermons, his Pains into pious Lectures; and in all his Miſery not vent the leaſt Invective that might ſtain the purity of his Maker. What an admirable Creature is the valiant

valiant, though afflicted, Soul; whoſe hopes are mounted above the World, that makes his Croſs his Triumph, and bears his ſufferings with ſo much patience, you would think he felt them not, as if Piety had made him inſenſible: his Humility hath taught him to entertain his preſſures with ſo much pleaſure, you would think he were in love with miſery; ſo nobly, that he becomes his very misfortunes, and makes them amiable: his Devotion, like the Philoſophers Stone, turns all into Gold, and though he live never ſo poor, yet he is ſure to die rich. His very grave becomes a Cabinet of precious duſt, and his reward is Heaven; to compare him to a Rock that out-braves the waves and lyes fixt when 'tis over-whelmed; to ſay, that his *Piety*, like the Sun, becomes more tranſparent by being clouded; or that, like the *Palm*, he Conquers the very clogs that load him: theſe are but poor Encomiums for ſo Divine a Spirit: like the lower

Spheres, that, carried about by a higher Orb, yet have a motion of their own. Though he be ſurrounded and hurried away with ſtorms, yet ſtill his heart is the true Load-ſtone that points at Heaven. Tell me of Stones that expell poyſon, herbs that fright away Thunder ſpells, or incantations; theſe are but poor Vertues Compared with his. Like a Diamond, his afflictions do but ſhape and point him to a Luſtre fit to be enchaſte among Saints, and Rings of Seraphins: his flames do but purifie and make his ſtamp the brighter, and he is not aſhamed of his miſery becauſe he thinks it is as much glory to live as to die a Martyr. How often did Satan call *Job* Coward for his patience, in hopes at leaſt to make him rayl againſt Heaven? He knew he had no other way to conquer him but by himſelf: indeed, God is then beſt pleaſed when he ſeems to frown at us, and he makes us Sufferers that he might make us Saints. The Iſraelites

muſt paſs thorough a breaſt of Enemies, if they would come to *Canaan*. He deſerves not to win Heaven, whoſe piety is ſuch a coward that he dares not fight for it.

And ſhall the light afflictions of this preſent World, O Lord, diſcourage us from thy Service, and drive us from the Joyes to come. Thou diſcovereſt thy Love even in our puniſhments, and thy Goodneſs in the midſt of our Misfortunes: Whilſt we prophanely queſtion thy Providence, and grumble to entertain the ſmalleſt trouble for thy Sake. Were we ſenſible of thy Glory and the brightneſs of our reward, we ſhould not only ſubmit in a comely obedience to thy Will, but alſo triumph in our Sufferings; and rejoyce even in the meaneſt condition, that we might ſhew how much we value thy favour, beyond the intereſts of the World.

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Cant. ch. 11. V. 1.

I am the Roſe of Sharon, and the Lilly of the Valleys.

NAture's perfume, the Roſe, diſplays its treaſures through the air, enveigling our ſenſes at once both with its Beauty and Odours. Other flowers like *Hippocrates* have more Colour than ſmell; but this grows Lovely in its witherings, and retains a ſweetneſs even in its duſt: and when it leaves to be a poſey may be turn'd into a Cordial; as if Nature Epitomiz'd the vertues as well as the beauties of other Vegetals into one, and made its Paradice in a Roſe. I ſee, I can cull not only Phyſick but Divinity from it, and diſcover the wonders of Creation in the bluſhing encloſures of a flower. The ſmalleſt Violet, as the Poet ſings, breathes a Diety, and every Plant wears the Livery of Heaven: but in the Crimſon attire

attire of a Roſe, I find a more Lovely Embleme of him, who is the Roſe of *Sharon.* A Roſe in his immaculate Conception, in the beauty and purity of the Divineſt Life that ever was or can be, A Roſe in his Crown of thorns, the perfume of his prayers, and the fragrancy of his miracles. Were the whole earth turn'd into an Arabia, and its richeſt odours ſublimed to a perfume; were nature rifled of all its ſweets, and its moſt raviſhing vegetables, crouded to a poſey; yet were they infinitely below the ſweetneſs of this Roſe. Not that Centinel of Nature, the Marigold, the early nymph of the goddeſs of the morn, that riſes from its golden bed at the firſt appearance of its Lover; not the Suns wooer, the Heliotrope, that ſtrives to kiſs and Circulate with that beaming Mover, as if nature had flower'd the earth with Stars or made its Coloured progeny idolaters of the Skie; nor all thoſe growing Prodigies that enamour both our eye

and thoughts to admiration, are not worthy to be Compared to this Heavenly Mirror, the Roſe *Sharon*.

O my Saviour, I will run after the odour of thy perfumes, and pant after thoſe ſpiritual delights that ſtream from thy Throne. Thou art infinitely amiable; O imprint on my ſoul a purity that makes men capable of thy heavenly infuſions, the Divine irradiations of thy Grace and Love. What is the Comlineſs of the Creatures but a drop of that tranſcendent excellency that is in thee? O let it be my delight, as *it* is my felicity, to imitate the perfect innocency of thy life, that through the ſweetneſs of thy merits my Sacrifices may be found pleaſing; and that, when this corruptible ſhall be changed, and this mortal put on immortality, I may receive the reward of the faithful, the inheritance of the juſt, and be made partaker of everlaſting Glory in thy preſence for evermore.

Geneſ. Chap. 28. v. 12.

And he dreamed, and behold a Ladder ſet upon the earth, and the top of it reached unto heaven; and behold the Angels of God aſcending and deſcending on it.

NO ſooner had *Jacob* made a ſtone his pillow (ſuch is the happineſs of contented humility) but a glorious Viſion ſalutes his eye: that obedienee which brought him from his father on a journey to *Syria*, became a nobler guide, and ſhewed him the way to heaven; thoſe divine Travellers, the Angels, aſcending and deſcending before him, Happy ſolitude, that met with ſuch heavenly company! the hardſhip of his lodging was abundantly recompenced by this bleſſed interview, when the God of his father, the Lord of all

creatures, appeared unto him, reviving him with the gracious ſupports of his promiſes and providence. When I look upon the poſture of this happy ſleeper, I cannot chuſe but wonder at the vanity of thoſe, that expect viſions from heaven on their beds of down, and look for revelations amidſt their pleaſures; their tender ſpirits would grow ſick, and out of love with piety, ſhould it diſturb or contradict their eaſe: How quickly would their devotion catch cold, ſhould they, with *David*, get up at midnight to pray? God drops not his miracles into the lap of the wanton, nor communicates the riches of his glory, but to thoſe who are reſigned to him. *John* muſt be an Exile, before he can be the Divine; and have conference with none but Angels, if he would be a fit Notary for heaven. Thoſe holy men, that had no other company than ſolitude and their prayers, could not have traffick'd ſo purely with heaven, had they not

not diſclaimed all commerce with the world; and diſroabing themſelves of all ſecular intereſts, obtained a nobler furniture of grace, and became veſſels of honour.

Jacob here had no other Canopy, but the air; no other lights to his bed, than the lamps of heaven; and the Angels paſs to and fro, as it were a guard to ſecure him. How ſecurely doth he reſt, that leans on Providence, and makes that the depoſitory of his ſoul! Repoſe thus bleſt becomes a Sanctuary, nor need he fear to be diſturbed in his ſleep, that makes God his keeper; or that his pious night-thoughts ſhall have any other dreams, than thoſe of peace.

Jacob had no ſooner cloſed his eyes, but thoſe holy Porters unlock the Heavens, and invite him up; but 'tis by a Ladder: We cannot climb heaven in a moment; the way to happineſs is but by degrees, and, as our Saviour tells us, 'tis narrow too. Every vertue is a ſtep to eternity, and

he is ſo much nearer heaven, that daily treads his vices under. We cannot be too good proficients in a holy life, or think that in the ſmalleſt acts of piety we have enough to carry us to happineſs: 'tis not a few ſteps, but a conſtant progreſs that mounts us thither. O how bad is he that thinks himſelf too good to be made better.

The promiſes of thy Glory are infinite, O Lord, and yet how careleſly do we embrace them? Thou haſt ſhewn us the way unto thy Self, and yet we are not only unwilling but even weary of walking to thee. Alas, Are the joyes of thy kingdome not worth the coming to? can we think to climb up unto thy Throne by a lame and idle Devotion? how nimbly do we purſue the vanities of the world, but pretend a faintneſs in thy ſervice? We can run after the periſhing concernments of this life, but make little or no progreſs in the race, which thou haſt ſet before us; Quicken us, O Lord, and make us more

more earneſt and zealous in thy ſervice; and as thou haſt ſent thy ſon to bring us to thy ſelf, do thou likewiſe ſend thy Spirit to ſanctifie us for thy ſelf; and then we, who of our ſelves can ſcarce move unto thine Altar, will, by the aſſiſtance of thy Grace, run the way of thy Commandements.

Proverbs 18. v. 14.

But a wounded Spirit who can bear?

NOt the pureſt temper, not the vaſteſt Bulk, the world it ſelf, that hoſpital of ſinners, cannot; for it groans and travails, it ſelf, to be delivered. Heaven was no longer a place for thoſe ambitious ſpirits, who exchang'd their glory for thoſe flames, which torture them not ſo much as that infinite deſpair, which for ever ſecludes, and ſequeſters them from

from it. No wonder ſome think, there is no other hell than this, for its torments are not to be match'd: Stakes or Gridirons are but flea-bites to this vulture: tortures of the neweſt faſhion, are pleaſant Martyrdoms, eaſie pains, compar'd to this. Thoſe dying miſeries, do but ſtorm, and affright ſenſe; whilſt this living death, this killing life, diſplayes its cruelties on a more heavenly object; and ſtriving to deſtroy and rifle an Immortal part, makes death it ſelf a gentle murtherer to it. Skreeks of Owls that add blackneſs to the very night it ſelf, groans of parting ſouls that fill the ear and room, with trembling Epitaphs, writ in Characters mournful as the grave and ſilence; are harmonies to the dying Elegies of a wounded ſpirit, that breathes nothing but bleeding Satyrs againſt it ſelf. See how with *David* it goes mourning all the day, and all the night too, ſurrounded with black and fatal Ideas, and turns his bed into a bath, which

thoſe

thoſe weeping ſprings, his eyes, have made; and inſtead of bright and gentle airs, breathes nothing but dark and trembling accents, which the buſie Devil labours to reſound back in doleful and deſpairing Ecchoes. How ſadly doth it expoſtulate with heaven, My deareſt God, what is become of that Lovely attribute, thy Mercy? are the treaſures of it ſhut up from a poor ſinner? and wilt thou be a God of mercy to the whole world, and wilt not to me!

O let me for ever dwell in dungeons deep beyond the reach and ſight of man, ſo I may but enjoy the brightneſs of thy face. Let me live more poor and diſconſolate than *Job* upon his dunghill in a naked and forſaken deformity, ſo I may but hide my ſpots, and put on a Beauty in my ſoul, which may invite thine eye again.

Whoever thou art that now riots it in the world, and dallieſt with damnation, didſt thou but know the agonies

agonies of guilt, the cruelties of a Murdering ſin, and the ſtings thy pleaſures leave behind them, how quickly wouldeſt thou ſacrifice thy life to nobler ſervices, and employ thy time in ſweeter thoughts; Were thou now to die, how would the terrours of an evil Life affright thee, when every ſin would appear a Meſſenger of horrour, and the flattering [illegible] prove but an infernal Comforter.

Shew me that Gyant-Conſcience this would not at length Maſter, that frozen ſoul theſe flaſhes would not melt and blaſt again, that Steel-back'd ſinner whom gentle loads will not at length numerouſly over-burden.

The world knows not a miſery like it, the terrours of the Grave are trifles to it, which could it but ſhroud the Guilty ſoul, and in its dark and ſolitary regions promiſe a freedome from future Miſery, how willingly will it buy its peace with death, and beg its ſharpeſt Dart for a ſpeedier paſ-

paſſage: loſs of friends or fortune, Croſſes to the very bone are but Scratches to theſe wounds: give me a Catalogue of afflictions and there is none I think, except this, which is not tolerable: *But a wounded ſpirit who can bear?*

How unſupportable, O Lord, is the burden of a wounded Spirit? how terrible are the Stings of Conſcience, and the apprehenſions of thy wrath? how miſerable is he that ſecurely wraps himſelf in Sin, and grows inſenſible of his guilt till the memory of his Crimes revive it; and when death puts him in mind of the World to come, hath nothing but the horrours of his life before him. Thou haſt plac'd an impartial Regiſter in our boſomes which no flattery can bribe, nor tears ſilence, from reminding us of thy Juſtice; and yet how many are there whoſe Leviathan-conſciences, break the Silver Cords of thy Law like threds of Towe; and are ſo far from acknowledging their guilt,

guilt, that they are hardned in impenitence? But teach me, O Lord, as I ſin ſo to ſorrow daily; that ſo when I ſhall come and appear before Thee, I may find no other terrors, no other ſins my accuſers, than thoſe which I have, if not throughly crucified, yet at leaſt ſeriouſly repented of in my ſelf before.

Eccleſ. ch. 12. v. 13.

Fear God and keep his Commandments; for this is the whole Duty of Man.

AND yet how few are there that perform it, which yet is not ſo much our duty, as it ought to be our delight. He that hath but once got the habit of adoring his Maker, will quickly find Religion but a pleaſure; and that Law which ſeems ſo hard and unpleaſing to the world, will be but a recreation to his ſoul.

But

But alas, How little is there of *Davids* piety amongſt us now, when inſtead of delighting in Gods Law, we deface it more; and are ſo far from meditating in it either day or night, that we never think upon it at all: 'Tis the duty of the world now to ſin confidently, and an argument of much valour, to baniſh this timorous religion of fearing either God or his Law. The Preachers Doctrine is now grown worſe than a paradox' meer Apochrypha, 'tis hereſie to revive it. To tell us of our duty, is to ſcandalize the times, that ſo officiouſly break the Law.

And no wonder there are ſo many Atheiſts; there was never ſuch a time to ingender them as now. Track Antiquity to its firſt riſe, and you cannot match this age again. The world never multiplied ſo faſt in ſin; abominable Sects, like Colonies, new plant the earth; prophaneneſs is grown hereditary, and ſprouts out by propagation; ſo that in time poſterity may

may perhaps become Heathens. Were God and his promiſe mutable, a deluge would be but a ſleight puniſhment. We do not only ſin, but glory in it more, whilſt ſome, not content to be private and ſilent Atheiſts, proclaim it loud, and are mad to have the credit of being known ſo; as if we could not be ingenious enough, unleſs we denied our Maker. No wonder, Religion is out of tune, when there is no harmony of a Church; or that Chriſtianity ſounds low, when common Morality is not heard.

And yet it is a Leſſon we cannot learn too well, a tribute we cannot pay too much, too often. We owe our beings to the bounty of his hand, what homage then can we better pay, than that, which by glorifying of him, purchaſeth a Crown for our ſelves.

Tell me, ye blind followers of the world, what's the glory ye pretend to? Ye that laugh at Heaven, and make Divinity a Mantle for unrighteouſneſs,

ouſneſs, that with the Phariſee, count formality your Religion, and make an outſide-Piety your Duty. Alas, Heaven is not got by pious frauds, guilded crimes, or fortunate tranſgreſſions; nor the Divine Eye to be deluded with a painted zeal. 'Tis not a pretended ſanctity that can cloath us with immortality, nor a faſhionable devotion only, that will carry us to Heaven. How miſerable is he whoſe god is the world, and makes it his Religion to neglect his Maker.

What didſt Thou beſtow our reaſon on us for (O Lord) but to hearken unto the voice of thy Law, that the Celeſtial Oratory of thy Word might at leaſt win us from an ignorant prophaneneſs? Shall Heathens that had no other end, no other reward for their Piety, than ſome temporary applauſe, or the inward triumphs of their Spirits for doing well, outſtrip us in the beauties of a Moral life; and we that have higher and purer

purer hopes, be ſcarce honeſt for thy ſake? Shall they that knew thee not be more paſſionately good than we that have found out heaven, and expect Eternity to ſucceed? Though it was not in the power of man to find Thee, till Thou didſt reveal Thy ſelf in Chriſt, yet now having ſo richly and fully ſhewn us the Treaſures of thy Love, ſhall we not ſtrive to do ſomething for thy Glory? Make us, we beſeech Thee, to conſider the advantages that are in thy Service, the ſhappineſs that attends obedience, and that Crown which is the reward of Faith, that ſo our Affections being mortified unto theſe periſhing objects here below, may be enlivened only with deſires after thoſe Eternal Excellencies that are in Thee.

Luke

Luke ch. 10. v. 25.

And a certain Lawyer ſtood up and tempted him, Saying, Maſter what ſhall I do t oinherit Eternal Life.

IT was the beſt Queſtion that ever he put, and gain'd him more than all his Pleading ever did beſides; nor could it be any diſhonour to him, from a Lawyer to turn Sollicitor in ſuch a Suit.

This was the higheſt Caſe he ever met with; for 'twas his Soul's; and where he could better be his own Client than Counſeller. All his Law could never have divided it, had he not ſo fortunately met with Divinity it ſelf to reſolve him.

How blind are they that think to find out the hidden Myſteries of Salvation, by their own ſhallow brain; that grope for happineſs and eterni-

ty

ty in Natures bosom only; that make *Aristotle* their Bible, and go no further than his *Ethicks* to learn Divinity, whose curiosity is their Religion, and triflingly pour out the happiness of their time on some Learned Manuscript, sacrificing their nobler Meditations to Nature only; they study the world so long that they forget Heaven, and are so taken with the Pen of some Witty Mortal, that they seldom peruse Scripture, that Language of Life, the Celestial Oratory of the Spirit.

The good Lawyer hath so long laboured in other mens business, he had almost forgot his own; his many motions had well nigh talkt away his better part: 'twas now time to speak for himself; and after all his wranging, think of a Writ of Ease.

How natural are the Thoughts and Enquiries after happiness in every one? The very Pagans would have a Paradise, as well as gods, of their own making; and rather than want a fe-

felicity, they would fancie an *Elizium.*

'Tis the genuine Ambition of the Soul to thirſt for ſomething beyond the world: how vain are they then, that make the World their happineſs, and place Heaven in their enjoyments here? How inquiſitive are ſome Lawyers of the world, whoſe queſtion it is, How they may grow rich? whoſe Divinity it is to become wealthy, & count a good purchaſe the beſt inheritance. See how the Ambitious man gapes after preferment, & places his felicity in his Fortune, making Honour his Heaven, worſhipping the glittering World, and ſells Eternity for a title.

See how the covetous wretch locks up Heaven in his Cheſt, and ties his happineſs in a Bag; whoſe Deity is his Money, and ſtill his Queſtion is, how to get more. See how the ſenſualiſt courts the world, & makes pleaſure his happineſs, that ſpends a good inheritance on his luſts, bnt never ſeeks how to get a better.

So

So ſadly do our vices drown Religion, that we are inquiſitive after any thing but Heaven; we all run after happineſs, but cannot overtake it, becauſe it is not to be graſp'd within the arms of Mortality. 'Tis not all the flattering Honours and guilded frailties of the world that can match Eternity, and bring us to a never-dying Manſion: we muſt look for ſomewhat that is as immortal as our ſouls, more durable than time, and cannot receive a period with our breath. 'Tis every mans caſe as well as the Lawyers; and every Lawyers as well as his: 'tis a Queſtion that will become any Profeſſion; for it concerns all to enquire betimes what they ſhall do to inherit eternal life?

With what pleaſure, O Lord, do we embrace and run after our earthly advantages; but ſeldom reflect upon that time when we and all things with us ſhall receive a period? We can entertain any thing with more delight, than that which concerns

cerns us moſt, the happineſs of the world to come.

We are more earneſt after the periſhing intereſts of this Life than in laying up a treaſure for Eternity, and making proviſion for our inheritance above: We beſeech thee, make us to ſee the little uſe, but the great vanity that is in this World; that ſo the pleaſures of it may not ſteal away our thoughts from the contemplation of a better.

Matth. ch. 15. v. 28.

And he ſaid unto her, O Woman, great is thy Faith.

HAppy ſhe, that was found worthy ſo great an expreſſion! her female tongue made amends for all its former follies, having now by its pious anſwers merited ſo divine an *Encomium*. Poor woman, how rich was ſhe, in whoſe breſt was minted a treaſure, which Kings and Princes compared, are Beggars to. All *Paleſtine*

leſtine with its Balm and Spices could not furniſh her with an Antidote to revive her Child, and charm away the Devil. See the Miracles of Faith, that could ſave two Souls, the Mother's and the Daughter's!

So miraculous that even a grain of it can remove Mountains, level Hills, and plain the moſt rugged and lofty Soul into an humble and fruitful valley.

'Twas this that ſmoothed the ſurface of the Ocean, that made the waves a walk, and turned their furious curles into a pavement for *Peter*'s feet. 'Twas the Centurions Faith that ſtav'd death away from his Servant, which all his Guard could never have kept off; that reſtored the blind mans eyes again, and made him ſee better than Nature could have done. All the wonders of the Goſpel were ſtill cloſed up with *Thy Faith hath healed thee.* And yet that Faith, which then wrought ſo many miracles, is now become the greateſt mi-

racle

racle it ſelf, whilſt ſome take the ſign for the thing; they place the greatneſs of their Faith in the greatneſs of their works, and have ſo good an opinion of themſelves, that they think it Faith enough meerly to do well. Others hope to be canonized for their Doctrines, though not for their lives, ſcorn the company of all religious Duties, and think to travel to Heaven by their Faith, which is alone. Obedience, true ſorrow for ſin, that lovely robe of a mourning ſoul, and the nobler ornaments of our ſpiritual warfare, are but empty Ceremonies, and both theſe men's Creeds are of their own making; but Heaven is not got by ſpeculation only: He that placeth his Faith in his Brain, and thinks religion hath not its *agenda* too, may like *Moſes*, view and talk of *Canaan* afar off; but never enter it. Our Obedience muſt be louder than our Pretenſions; 'tis not a noiſe that will Saint us, 'tis not our Profeſſions only, but our Practices too,

that proclaim our Faith.

Though our Merits cannot reach Heaven, yet our endeavours may, if unfeigned; becauſe there is a mercy that will pardon our defects: All the bloſſoms of our piety ſprout out from this ſtem, and he that either believes or loves his Saviour, cannot think he ſtrives too much to live well.

This was the Womans Faith here, and ſhe had ſcarce pour'd it out with her Tears, when Satan all affrighted, forſakes his Hold, not able to abide the Eccho of its ſound, ſeconded by the diviner Accent of our Saviours Lips. And this Faith muſt be our Amulet againſt Sin, and by its diviner Charms drive *Satan* to his chain. 'Tis this that prepares Heaven for us, that makes us ſurvive our Tombs, become Immortal in our Graves, and promiſes Eternity to our Duſt, 'tis this that ſeals our happineſs, and brings us there where the ſame Jeſus ſhall receive us with an *Euge* to his Glory.

Thou

Thou ſenteſt thy Son, O Lord, to die for us, that by believing in him, we might have life: He under whom thou haſt put all things, was pleaſed to put himſelf under them, and left his Throne to be Crucified for our Souls, that we might receive the triumphs of his paſſion, and be partakers of his Glory. O let not thoſe miſeries of our natures which firſt invited thy mercy, make us uncapable of it: let not thoſe that knew thee not but by thy miracles, be more zealous in their acknowledging thy goodneſs, than we who by the manifeſtation of thy Love plead an intereſt in thy blood. But grant that we may live in a perpetual gratulation to thy merits, who cameſt from the boſom of thy Father to ſave our ſouls, To this end do thou give unto us that Faith without which it is impoſſible to pleaſe thee, and with which thou giveſt every other Grace: teach us ſo to relie on thy Mercy that we may not neglect the means, or think

that a dead Faith will carry us to that Life, which thou haſt promiſed to none but ſuch as work out their ſalvation with fear and trembling.

John, ch. 20. v. 11.

And ſhe ſtooped down, and looked into the Sepulcher.

SEe how religiouſly *Mary* ſtoops to behold her Saviour in his Tomb, whilſt her younger ſiſters that ſpend more time on their Dreſs than their Devotion, will ſcarce kneel to their Prayers. 'Twas not an apparition of Angels in the ſhape of Ghoſts, nor the mournful ſilence of a Tomb, where dwelt no other Object than Death, cloathed all in horrour, that could fright her from her contemplation.

See the power of Divine Love that can even with pleaſure look that in the face, whoſe very aſpect only ſtrik

ſtrikes the world to paleneſs; and ſtand not only at its door, but enter into its Chamber to meet heaven; and without fear in the ſad and ſolitary vault, repoſe it ſelf among the Bones and Carcaſſes of the Dead, and and make a Coffin its pillow till the morn. Thus the Martyrs triumphed in their flames, and were Charioted up in raptures by Fire; as if the greedy Element had warm'd them only. How nobly did they meet Death, and ſang Anthems to the Muſick of their Chains, as if they had been rather Prieſts than Sacrifices in that cruel Solemnity!

How ſweetly did *Stephen* cloſe his eyes after he had ſeen Jeſus, and Heaven opened; and then chearfully expired under an heap of Stones; a monument richer than the proudeſt Marble, having with his own blood writ himſelf this Epitaph, the beſt of any; *I am the firſt Martyr.*

Thus the Saints made their torments their pleaſure, and turned

death with all its terrors into a ſcene of mirth. 'Twas not the rage of Tyrants, nor the fury of the moſt ingenious kinds of torture, that could force them from the love of Jeſus.

He that loves his Saviour, will with *Mary*, not only ſtoop, but ſtep into a Tomb, and paſſionately embrace even a Coffin for his ſake; he will look on death but as the Meſſenger of his Glory, the Harbinger of his Happineſs; and therefore with St. *Paul* all in raptures, all in flames, beg a diſſolution; whilſt his Soul full of nothing but approaching heaven, is all in extaſies tranſported thither.

How hardly can we be perſwaded, O Lord, to forſake the vaniſhing pleaſures of this life for thy Glory and our own Happineſs? How unwillingly ſhould we lay down our lives for thy ſake or the Goſpels, that can ſo hardly part with one ſin in obedience to thy Law? Thy yoke is eaſie,

eaſie, and thy ſervice a perfect freedom; and yet we count thy Sanctury a priſon, thy Law a trouble, and can ſcarce ſacrifice ſo much time to our Devotions as to pay unto thee the honour due unto thy Name. Pardon and pity this Corruption of our frames; and teach us whether we live or die, to delight in that for which thou mad'ſt us; even to glorifie thee: that ſo whenſoever this earthly Tabernacle ſhall be diſſolved, we may receive our change with joy and be carried by Angels to an everlaſting inheritance.

John, ch. 11. v. 25.

Jeſus wept.

O Who can hear this and not diſſolve all in pious ſhowers? Can the moſt frozen eye read this, and not thaw it ſelf all in ſtreams? He that hath not ſo much piety as to

weep

weep for himself or his sins. yet let him have so much humanity as to accompany his Saviours Tears.

And yet see how the marble Jews in stead of seconding, censure his grief, with a *Could not he that restored the eyes of the blind, have kept* Lazarus's *open?*

No wonder they would not be Mourners with him, who were to be Murderers of him; and be but little sensible or compassionate of his tears, whose cruelty was scarce satisfied with dearer drops, when his whole body became an Eye that wept blood.

And yet, Divinest Saviour, how many are there that bear thy title, but indeed are Jews, that pretend to wear the Livery of thy name, but blot out the golden Characters of thy Cross. How coldly must they needs be affected with thy tears, that are scarce sensible of thy sufferings; and be but careless of thy life, who are so forgetful of thy Death?

O *Mary*, how richly are thy tears now requited, thoſe eyes that became moving baths for thy Saviour's feet, did now run over to ſee His brimfull, and diſtill drops, whoſe very embalming revived thy Brother?

O *Lazarus*, didſt thou but know thy glory, thou wouldſt die ſtill, to be ſo lamented, and willingly be buried in thy Grave again to be ſo honorably bedewed!

No queſtion, when thou wert a ſpectator of his ſufferings, but thou didſt exceed the women in their tears, and ſacrifice thy Eyes in ſhowers to thy divine Reſtorer.

This was indeed the greateſt Funeral that ever the world ſaw, or is like to ſee; for the Lord himſelf was a Mourner here.

Divineſt Saviour, thou wept'ſt for thoſe that could not, and for many that would not weep for themſelves, and wouldſt not deny thy tears who pouredſt out thy life; thou

thou art ſo infinitely good, thou deſireſt but unfeigned ſorrow for ſin to excuſe the guilt thereof; and yet ſo far are we (ſuch is our miſery) from accompanying thy tears, that we can ſcarce weep for our own ſins. O teach us, in a pious gratitude to do ſomthing for thy ſake, who haſt done ſo much for ours; that as thou haſt glorified thy ſelf by our Redemption, we may alſo glorifie thee by a conſtant thankſgiving; and may no more ſell our ſelves to ſin, that have been ſo dearly bought for Heaven and the joys of thy Kingdom.

John 12. v. 2.

But Lazarus was one of thoſe that ſate at the Table with him.

CAn the dead eat then? was not *Lazarus* but new wound up in his grave, and is he ſet at meal? Is his Tomb

Tomb turned into a Table? and does he wipe his hands in the Napkin that bound up his head? He that was ready to have feasted Worms, now feasts himself, and is risen from his dead companions a guest amongst the living.

We read indeed of some that all pale and liveless, were stretch'd out for a Coffin, but reviv'd again, when that little spark of life that lay glimmering in the expiring Embers, in a corner of the panting heart recovered its flames. But here Death and *Lazarus* had embrac'd too closely to be so parted. His soul had likely taken its flight before, and his Body lay so long in his Mothers Arms, 'twas just dissolving into its Principles again; and behold him now above ground, as if but newly risen from his Bed, all fresh with life and vigour; he hath changed his chamber, and from the lower Regions of the other world is returned to his old lodgings,

ings, where he is now at Supper throng'd with multitudes of people that come not for Almes, but to be Spectators of this wonder. Had the end of the world been then, or a resurrection of others for company, *Lazarus* at his arrival to the world again, might well have fancied with his Countrimen, that the second life should be on Earth, and Heaven kept in pleasures here.

No, *Lazarus*, though now alive, thou must die again to live for ever; nor must thy revival now, consummate thine, but manifest Gods Glory; though it be thine too, above expression, to have been thus the subject of it. Thou needest not fear to die again, having done it once, nor doubt but that he who raised thee now, will do it hereafter too. Didst thou ever think to have enjoyed this world again; or to have been freed from thy imprisonment, till the great and general delivery? 'Twas beyond thy Sister's Faith till she saw it; and

now

now having had two lives, if thou ſpenteſt the former on thy ſelf, or the world, thou didſt wholly ſacrifice the latter to thy divine Reſtorer.

How many expiring ſouls, all frighted with the horrour of their crimes, could they but have their ſpan a little lengthned; or after an ages durance in their graves, but revive a little before their doom; how gladly would they turn their ſongs of pleaſure into penitential Anthems, their prophane Notes into diviner Ayres; and tune out their Lives in pious Strains.

But alas! He that cannot employ this life well, in vain expects to do it in another, which he is not worthy of might it be obtained. He whoſe Piety here hath reach'd him a taſte of heaven, a glimpſe of happineſs, will be ſo little in love with the vanities of this world, that in ſtead of deſiring a longer, or another life here, he will be but ambitious of leaving This.

It

It was by thy power, O Lord, That *Lazarus*, carried out to his Grave, ſhould return alive. That mournful expreſſion (*Thy Friend is dead*) drew thee to the diſcovery of thy Love and Power, in his Reſurrection. O let there be the ſame concurrence of thy Grace and Spirit, to the raiſing and reforming of my ſoul to a new and holy life; it was the miſery of expiring man that drew thee from the boſom of thy Father to redeem him. O let the Scepter of thy Word and Truth be as powerful in its heavenly influence upon my Soul, as the Prophets ſtaff that revived the dead; that ſo dying daily, I may live for ever; and being prepared for my death, may enter into that life from which nothing but ſin can exclude me.

John ch. 13. v. 23.

Now there was leaning on Jeſus boſome one of his Diſciples whom he loved.

SEe how ſweetly is the Diſciple Couch'd? how boldly doth he make his Maſters breſt his Pillow, loading him with a double burden, his ſins and himſelf?

Bleſt familiarity! Would not Kings leave their Thrones to have been in his room, and ambitiouſly forſake their Golden Canopies for ſuch a repoſure? Here might the vaſteſt ambition both ſeat and ſatiate it ſelf without aſpiring higher; the greateſt Avarice might here have found a treaſure beyond which it could not covet. What Lover would not ſcorn the lap of the moſt admired Female, for ſuch an enjoyment, and become a diviner Amoriſt.

Was

Was not this Disciple above the rest? If this be not a precedency, what is? A dignity which none besides himself succeeded in.

Happy Favourite! Who would not have trampled Crowns and Scepters for such preferment? Had *Mary*, in whose bosom (once Loves Cradle) so many Wantons lull'd themselves, that turned her eyes into living Minerals, and her hair into a Towel of the newest fashion, been graced with such a priviledge, not her eyes only, but the noblest rivulets of her blood would have overflown, all transported out in grateful streams. How pleasingly doth the Disciple lay his Ear to that Heart which was the life of the world, as if he would count its motions, and by its divine pulse be rock'd asleep in raptures?

Behold, O my soul, and see in the posture of this happy man, the Emblem of thy own felicity, the place of thy reception and future Glory.

Art

Art thou ambitious of it here, then behold him on his Croſs with his arms extended to receive thee: O run and rowl thy ſelf on that Breſt, the Seat of Love, wherein lies all the treaſures of thy happineſs. Thou haſt a priviledge even beyond the Diſciple; for thou maiſt not only lean and depend, but embrace him too: Incircle him now then with the choiceſt endearments of thy Soul, the moſt paſſionate raptures of a lively Faith; and ſo the ſame Jeſus that permitted the Diſciple here to lean on his Breſt, will receive thee likewiſe in his arms hereafter, and place thee for ever in the boſom of his Glory.

Geography for deſcribing riches beyond thy reach; wiſhing thy ſelf an *Indian* that thou mighteſt dwell among Treaſures, and inhabit Mines, till thy very Hair became Silver indeed, till thou thou thy ſelf wert all turn'd to Ore, and every Bone into a Wedge of Gold.

Hear this, ye Gallants, that are ſo enamoured with the faſhions of this world, that ye have loſt all Idæa's of a better, ye that live meerly to pleaſe your ſenſe, and feed your luxury with the curious Martyrdom of a thouſand Creatures. As ye have purer veins, have purer paſſions too, and have nobler inclinations for heaven: the riches of your attire will not cloath you with immortality; ſhould you ſell your Eſtates when ye die, 'twould not purchaſe Paradice. It was the beſt Speech the old Orator ever uttered, when he ſaid, *He would not buy Repentance ſo dear.* 'Twas but an extemporary expreſſion, and yet all his Rhetorick could never match

match it: that one ſtrain was worth all his Orations, and will out-fame the Labours of his Pen.

Could we treble the lives of Patriarchs, and with them the pleaſures of the grandeſt Epicures: Could we, like *Cleopatra*, in a diſſolv'd Pearl ſwallow the treaſure and pleaſure of a Kingdom at a draught; or command the Creatures as peremptorily as ever the Centurion did his Servants; had we all the enjoyments we can either wiſh or fancy, whatever the ambition of the moſt vain and carnal appetite can long for; were the whole Earth turn'd into a Paradiſe, or a conſtant Spring beautifying its face. Could we live and not grow old, or being old, not feel the miſeries of age, could we unwind time again, and reverſe its Wheels, ſtop the Celeſtial *Mercuries*, the Poſts of Heaven in their courſe, and ſet the great Clock of the world backward again; nay, were our Bodies as durable as our Souls, that we could out-live Time

it

it self, and be above ground, even when the world shall receive its period: yet what shall we get, if after all our imaginary felicities and sliding contentments, we become a sacrifice for hell, enlisted in the cursed Catalogue of the damned Crew, a victime for eternal flames, lost for ever from God and Heaven. Then tell me who ever thou art, and ask *Dives* himself, *What is man profited though he should gain the whole world, and lose his own Soul?*

What is there in the world, O Lord, that we should love it thus, weary our selves in vain desires, and make the pleasures of this life our Felicity? How hard is it for him that is a stranger to thy Law, to perceive the emptiness of those enjoyments he hath so long rowled himself in, to resist the tempting advantages of sin, and undervalue the flashes of this life for that glory thou wilt impart. My God, teach me so to enjoy

joy the world that I loſe not Thee, let the bleſſings thou beſtoweſt quicken and increaſe, not dull my devotion; raiſe up my obedience, not drown my gratitude; that ſo the vanities of the world may be my ſcorn, and the joys of heaven my only ambition; that I may never for a periſhing fruition in this life, loſe both my Soul, and thy Grace together.

Matth. ch. 5. v. 8.

Bleſſed are the pure in heart: for they ſhall ſee God.

WHo then would not ſtrive to become pure? No wonder *David* was ſo earneſt for a clean heart, and a right Spirit: if this be the reward of piety, who would not become religious: Bleſt Spirits! how happy, how pure are ye, that behold the face of your Heavenly Father, who would not labour to imi-

tate you here, that he might be like you there, and poſſeſs joyes, ſuch as Raptures never knew. Shall the falſe and trecherous Vanities of the world ſteal away our hearts, and rob us of the hopes of this Glory, the fruition of this Sight.

Sight, in compariſon whereof the Royalties of the world, the Triumphs and Splendors of the eye, and the beauty of the whole Creation is not worth the looking at. A Sight, which no eye ever ſaw; but may, if it do not blindly loſe it ſelf on Objects here. No Ear ever heard its perfect deſcription; but may the Harmony and Hallelujahs of it, if it bow not to the charms of ſin and the muſick of the fleſh.

'Tis a ſight, whoſe Idæa cannot be drawn by the moſt lively and ſubtile ſpeculations of any Scholaſtick brain, though never ſo Angelical; 'tis not fancy but piety can reach it.

The Divine Traveller S. *Paul* himſelf, though newly there, could not give

give us a Copy of it, and Scripture characters it out but in Similitudes, to ſhew how infinitely tranſcendent is that Glory which is ſo much above expreſſion, ſo much above all comprehenſion. Were all the Diamonds the Earth is mother of, muſtred to a ſplendor, they would not match the ſmalleſt glance of the Suns Eye; and yet that noble Luminary ſurrounded with ſo many waiting Stars, that beg their Luſtre from him, is but a ſpark to the brightneſs of his face.

Who then would ſacrifice that part to the world, which may become the inſtrument of ſo much happineſs? and ſuffer the extravagancies of his blood to revel there, where nobler paſſions and flames ſhould triumph.

He that would dwell among the Spirits of the juſt, muſt teach his own to become ſo; and turn his body to a Temple, wherein his heart muſt be the Altar and Sacrifice too; or rather a kind of *Sanctum Sanctorum*, for the choiceſt gifts of the Spirit, to inhabit.

The Seat of Life must be turn'd into the Seat of Love, and the palace of the Spirits into a Court of Graces, and then that part which (as Naturalists observe) is the first that lives, and the last that dies, shall become purely vital, and not die at all.

Nothing but a Trinity can fill this Triangle, which we must therefore shape to the purest form, and teach it in all its pulses, to beat nothing but Heaven and Sanctity. Our breasts must become Closets of Devotion, and our hearts the Cabinets of Innocency and Prayer, enricht with that great Diamond, a lively Faith, the Lamp at which all our smaller Graces, as Candles light themselves, and like Stars borrow their Lustre from this Luminary.

'Tis not a heart that can dance to the Tune of any Religion, and pretend a Sanctity which it wears only in its face, that makes Fancy its Conscience, and stiffness of humour, tenderness of Spirit.

No,

No, 'tis a heart robed with Humility, and crowned all with Love, perfumed by Prayers, the Odours of Charity, and the fragrancies of a pious life, that couches it self within the arms of our Saviours Spouse, and becomes a mourner in its persecutions, that looks upon the World as the Enemy of its Glory, and had rather die than be a Rebel against heaven. 'Tis such a heart that prepares us for this Vision; and happy is he that's such a Puritan.

Strengthen us therefore, O Lord, against the vanities of the world, and raise up our thoughts to the Contemplation of thy Glory. Level in us every proud thought that dares exalt it self against the power and purity of thy Law; and sanctifie us for thy self and thy Service more, that the practice of a holy life may be, as it ought, our chiefest employment, that so when we depart from hence we may be received to thee, and being

ſeen no more here, may for ever ſee there, what before, neith r ey hath ſeen, nor ear heard, nor heart conceived, the Glory thou wilt impart in the fruition of thy ſelf.

Matth. ch. 8. v. 2.

Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canſt make me clean.

IS not ſin a Leproſie? Then the Lepers prayer is every Sinners too. He that had ſeen the Lepers Body, would not have wondred at his prayer: and yet could he but have viewed his Soul, he might perhaps have ſeen objects of more prodigie and horrour: the miſeries of his bloud which had loſt its verdure, and become but an unprofitable friend to Nature, every part being as it were dead-alive, by ſo unnatural a Nutrition, taught his tongue this neceſſary, though mournful kind of Confidence, *Lord, if thou wilt.* And

And He, whoſe Compaſſion never fails, to ſhew that his goodneſs was as great as his power, would not reject a ſuit wherein his Mercy was concerned; and thoſe limbs which might have been ſooner drown'd than bathed into a Cure, re-aſſume new life and beauty by the bounty of a touch.

Thus the Leper is new bodied again; but we read not of any Cure wrought upon his better part, and that perhaps had more need. The bed rid man his Succeſſor was far happier, whoſe ſin and diſeaſe were both taken away together.

How many are there, that like the Leper, look no higher than their Bodies, whoſe Superficies is all their Religion; whilſt the nobler piece that gives them life, lies all neglected under ſome Chronical Infection?

Our Bloud ſhall have all the delicacies, that Art or the moſt chymical Luxury can invent to feed it flames; whilſt our brighter part, thes Divine and Celeſtial fire which in-

ſpires us, lies all quencht and robb'd of its immortal aliment, and can carry back nothing but a dim and hectick luſtre to its maker.

The torment of a Limb ſhall teach us more devotion in an hour than all the concernments of our Soul's could do in a year before, and the deformity of the meaneſt part will be an object of more ſhame and ſorrow to us, than thoſe pale and infernal ſhapes that attend ſin, and disfigure Heaven in us.

Of all Plagues this is the greateſt, and yet leaſt feared, as if Hell were but a Toy, Damnation a pleaſure, and the miſeries of our ſouls a Recreation to us.

Shew me that Beauty that is not a Leper, that innocence which carries not a guilt to bluſh at; that Saint, that Infant-man, that knows not what it is to ſin.

Were our veins purer than the lips of Violets that perfume the Chymiſtry of the Air, the drops of the Morn;

Morn; were *Adams* ſin a ſtranger to our blood, and our birth clear as the Morn, innocent as the new-blown Roſe: yet the deformity of our lives would ſoon teach us this prayer, and the blackneſs of our very thoughts would ſilently proclaim our uglineſs.

And yet, was there not in thoſe dayes a Generation that were clean in their own eyes, that juſtified themſelves even in their impurity and counted all the world but Lepers to them? Was not the Phariſee a greater Leper than the Publican, though ſo proudly he diſplay'd his beſt plumes? His very pride carried more Contagion with it, than the other mans ſins all put together.

He that truſts to the merit of his own paint, may loſe heaven and thoſe joyes which an humbler confidence ſecures.

O Lord, though I am not ſo bad perhaps as ſome, yet I am ſo bad in

my self, that the Leper here is a beauty to my soul, *Lazarus*'s Corps a comelineſs to my ſores; yet were I more impotent than the Cripple of *Bethesda*, more Leprous than the nine, whoſe ingratitude was more loathſom than their diſeaſe; were thoſe Legions, ejected by thy word, received in me, were I as bad as Satan could wiſh to make me, yet I know thy goodneſs, and I do not doubt thy power: For, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean.

Matth. ch. 24. v. 39.

And knew not, until the Flood came and took them all away.

HOw ſecurely did theſe ſinners cram themſelves for deſtruction? or, as if foreſeeing their inundation, they would by full ſtomachs latour to prevent an entrance. Life and Luxury were ſuch inſeparable companions

panions here, that nothing but death could part them. They had waded ſo long in an Ocean of ſin, it was impoſſible to eſcape drowning, and not be ſurrounded with the depths of a quick and overflowing judgment.

Noah might have preach'd himſelf dumb, and have ſooner talk'd himſelf aſleep in mild and fluent admonitions, than awake theſe drunkards; had not the waves made uſe of a rougher language; and in their own ſwelling dialect, the prodigious roaring of the depths buried them and their riots in ſilence together.

Had not God otherwiſe promiſed the world, how often had it ſince been delug'd? They were but eating and drinking; but we do even glut and carouſe it in ſin, commit riots upon Hell, and can teach the Epicure himſelf to revel.

Our Forefathers were but Dwarfs to us in ſin, whoſe tranſgreſſions have ſo far tranſcended theirs in bulk, that we are become greater Giants in Iniquity

quity than thoſe of the firſt age.

So monſtrous is ſin ſtill in its productions, that the whole earth like an Infernal *Africk* brings forth new prodigies of vice daily, that (were the world in a conſumption as ſome think it is, in vertue only, and the iniquities of the times) when they ſeem to be quite full, are but encreaſing ſtill.

They were but cold phlegmatick crimes that drowned the world, to the fiery ſins of this hotter age, that ſhall (and have already almoſt) ſet it in a combuſtion. 'Tis another Element than that of water, muſt puniſh the ſeared Conſciences of this age; and chains of darkneſs muſt fetter thoſe that run after new lights, the Meteors of their own invention.

The world was already drowned in ſin, when the waters, to compleat its exceſs, came and carried away theſe living-dead men, and buried them in the ſame grave together.

Such

Such is the fruit of a careleſs life, the miſeries of a wretchleſs impenitency; they were revelling in their feaſts when the greedy element devoured them, and they that drank iniquity like water, had a fit puniſhment for their iniquity. The waves grow high and mount up to a Tomb, the ſea becomes a ſpatious monument both to hide and waſh away their ſin, and they that ſwam in mirth, are now ſwallowed up in ſtreams, and little dreaming of their deaths, are ſhipwrackt in their very houſes, in the midſt of their pleaſures, being fatally ſurprized by a terrible and unwelcom Gueſt.

So righteous art thou, O Lord, and infinitely pure, that thy Juſtice, though it may ſeem to wink at, yet will not pardon impenitence, nor paſs by the reſolved impieties of wilful tranſgreſſors; and yet ſo infinitely good that thou never heighteneſt thy puniſhments, but when men do their

their iniquities; nor are thy Judgments epidemical, but when sin is so. Thou that desirest not the death of a sinner, wouldst not have destroyed so many, even all, had not their transgressions been so universally prodigious, that they came up in a cry together to pull down thy Justice. And though thou hast since out of the greatness of thy Love and compassion promised a security from the same, yet not from all punishment. Let the memory therefore of those that perisht by thy wrath for their neglect, remind us of our duty and thy glory; that so the examples of thy judgments upon others, may teach us, by a lively repentance to prevent our own.

Luke

Luke ch. 7. v. 5.

For he loveth our Nation, and hath built us a Synagogue.

BEhold the Character of a good Magiſtrate! one that might well be ſtiled the Father of his Country, though a *Roman*, whoſe patronage ſo eminently extended it ſelf over both, & the beſt part of their commonwealth.

This man was Chief not only in place but in piety too; all *Judea* could not match him; which ſince it loſt its freedom, was not wont to find or enjoy the happineſs of ſuch Rulers: and had they not hated Idolatry, they would have worſhipped this lover of their Nation.

Herod indeed did re-build their Temple, but it was more for fear than love; 'twas not out of piety but policy, the better to get the Crown: 'twas his ambition, not his devotion, that

that founded that ſtately Edifice; not ſo much out of zeal to God or his Countrey, as out of pure religion of becoming King.

Such is the Sanctity of the world, which makes Gods Honour, not the foundation, but a paſſage to their own; turns Religion into a footſtool for ambition, and makes heavenly pretenſions a ſtair-caſe to iniquity.

The Centurion here was a benefactor to the Nation out of pure zeal; and if not of their Religion, yet a great friend to it; whoſe Charity, not content to ſhew it ſelf in the management of their civil intereſts only, ſo nobly employed its power for the good of their ſouls and Church.

Unlike the Rulers of the world, whoſe Religion it is to have none at all, and are ſuch lovers of ſacred foundations, that inſtead of laying new, they are the only new faſhion Templers, that dare fight for to ruine the old, and defend their pulling down. Piety is lovely even in the meaneſt,

meaneſt, but in Kings and Governors it carries a ſplendor like thoſe Rayes that ſurround the head of a pictur'd Saint.

Pyramids, whoſe proud-reach dares juſtle the clouds and make them ſtumble in their races; Piles of Alabaſter carv'd to various ſhapes and pictures, lively as the dead, and the more like becauſe both breathleſs; Tombs of Marble; Vaults of braſs, are but poor Monuments, worthleſs Confervators, to that building without hands, wherein deceaſed piety eternally ſhall live.

The Centurion here by building Synagogues, rais'd a ſtructure to his own memory that hath outlaſted them; and the Jews, raviſht with ſuch unwonted favours in a Ruler, to expreſs their Gratitude, run in ſtreams to Jeſus, and petition him to heal his Son, preſſing him with an argument of great force with them; for he hath loved our Nation, and built us a Synagogue.

Such

Such honour have all they that honour thee, O Lord, whose zeal for thy Glory seldom returns empty to themselves; the meanest Offering to thy Altar, is not only accepted, but rewarded too; and they that make it their ambition to exalt thy Name, shall not have theirs forgotten.

Let not those that knew thee not, be more passionate for thy glory than we, whose very profession ought to adorn our Religion; whose bodies ought to become Temples, fit to entertain thy Spirit, the Spirit of Holiness of Love.

Thou wilt now no more be worshipt in Synagogues, but more spiritual Assemblies: Teach us therefore, to turn our Souls into Sanctuaries, and to raise up our thoughts in more lively addresses that we may not so much endeavour, to obtain the worlds time by a moral fame, as by the Sacrifice of Obedience, the righteousness of Eternity.

Luke

Luke ch. 9. v. 57.

Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

IT was the beſt reſolution he ever made; nor can any blame him for his boldneſs, when it was his glory to have been an Intruder; he might have gone on long and far enough, and not have met with ſuch heavenly Company. Was it his confidence, or his Love to Jeſus, that put him on?

See with how pious an importunity he accoſts him, whom perhaps he had never ſeen nor known before, but by his Miracles only; and that life which ſo aſtoniſht the eyes of the world, could not but attract his and his heart too; and therefore thinking it no preſumption to uſe all means of bettering himſelf, nor willing to loſe ſo fair an opportunity of becoming happy,

happy, ambitious of an admiſſion, all in raptures without any other complement than an humble earneſtneſs, ſalutes him, *Lord*, &c.

Nor could our Saviours poverty ſtop or weaken his reſolve, or diſcourage his intention; being not only content, but ambitious to ſhare even in the miſeries of ſo good a Maſter, in whoſe very wants he ſhould find a felicity beyond all the enjoyments of the earth.

Is not this Man a preſident for the whole world? he that will not follow Jeſus out of love, yet let him not for ſhame ſuffer a Jew or Publican to outſtep and ſtrip him too. Are the joys of an everlaſting bliſs of ſo poor a value that they are not worth the coming too? or ſhall we think any ſtep too weary that brings us to happineſs.

Were the way to heaven but ſtrewed with roſes or a thouſand pleaſures to revive the fleſh, the ſenſualiſt would turn a conſtant walker there, and be the

the formoſt in thoſe paths; the rich man cannot follow Jeſus for his precious Luggage: with which, becauſe he cannot without it, he will not ſtir.

The Epicure will not be of a Religion that preſcribes him temperance; for although perhaps he might make a ſhift to pray; he cannot tell how to faſt.

The way to heaven is too narrow for ambition, whoſe loſty port loves not to be ſtraightn'd in its paſſage, but muſt have a road wide as the world or Hell can make him, wherein his train of ſinful glories may follow him in a breaſt together.

So difficult a thing it is to leave the world even for heaven, and ſtrive againſt the blandiſhments of ſenſe for an unvaluable bliſs; as if all our hopes, all our happineſs were lapt and tied up in the concernments of this life only, and no other expectation for us beſides the pleaſures of Mortality.

And yet how many are there that pretend

pretend to follow Jesus, but are meer strangers to his footsteps, that pursue tracks not of his making, but their own finding. That path which so many holy men have footed before us, is too common, too prophane for them to tread in; they have found out a nearer cut of their own, and and think they shall come to heaven the sooner by turning out of the way. So unfortunate is that zeal which will needs be wandring after spurious and impostur'd Lights; and scorning the usual footsteps of the Church, loses it self in the blind and dark Meanders of Enthusiasme.

The way to heaven is not in a corner, and however narrow, it is open still; 'tis a path whose prospect is happiness; nor need he fear to lose his way, that doth not wilfully turn out of it, the poor man here, all transported, runs to Jesus, and mixing Humility with Resolution, because he will not be denied, in a begging kind of Confidence tells him, *Lord*, &c. Who

Who would not foot it even through wants and wildernesses, to come to *Canaan?* He that follows Jesus shall have no cause to repent his journey. He shall find such treasures even in the poverties of Religion, so much of Heaven and Contentment in the teeming miseries of a pious life, that he will not need much perswasion to make it his own resolution here, and chearfully leave all to follow Jesus.

Do thou therefore elevate our souls from the world, O Lord, and make them covetous of seeking thee and the things that are above: Thou art ascended to thy Throne in the raptures of Glory, draw our souls after thee in the raptures of Love and spiritual exaltation, that we may make the virtues and perfection of thy Life the rule of ours, and grant that we may not be so affected with the things of this world, that we should have no passion for thy Glory; but make

make us to walk chearfully in that way which thou haſt gone and ſet before us, that as we live by thy goodneſs, we may live to thy Glory; and as we move in Thee, we may be ever moving towards Thee, till we enjoy the happineſs of an eternal reſt in thy Kingdom.

Matth. ch. 9. v. 38.

Pray ye therefore the Lord of the Harveſt, that he would ſend forth more labourers into his Harveſt.

NO Prayer more neceſſary than this, nor this ever ſo much as now. Who would not burn and labour in his devotions, and earneſtly preſs Heaven with reſtleſs and religious votes to compaſſionate our want?

Every one may well make it his vocation now, without encroching on anothers office, and turn Labourers in

in ſo pious a work as this, to pray for the proſperity of the Goſpel.

Who can ſee the Garden of the Lord become a Deſart, folds of lambs inhabited by foxes, the houſe of prayer turn'd into the ruines of Sacriledge, and the Meſſengers of our peace glad to become the objects of our pity, without mournful and compaſſionate reflections? How vainly do they pretend affection that ſtrip their Mother, and count the exorbitancies of their Fancies, the Decencies of the Goſpel.

Can there be any want of Labourers where ſo many are, where every man becomes one himſelf? when ſheep become ſhepherds, and flocks are metamorphoſed into Paſtors. Every one can now handle the religious ſickle; he that can but talk or ſmatter Scripture, thinks himſelf divinely call'd, ſufficiently inſpired for a Sermon; and out of the ſimplicity of his zeal will needs be climbing up a Pulpit.

Thus *multitudes* of *Teachers* produce a *ſcarcity*, and we want the *more* by having ſo *many*. We may well pray then for a new *Miſſion*, or the *taking away* of thoſe that do not *hedge*, but *devour* the Vineyard.

He that loves his Saviour, will delight and triumph in the felicity of his Spouſe, in whoſe arms alone we can mount to happineſs, and ever beg a perpetuity of its Glory. He deſerves not to reap or ſhare in the bliſs of an immortal Harveſt, that will neither labour himſelf nor pray for the proſperity and increaſe of them that do.

And who, O Lord, can caſt his eye upon thy bleeding Spouſe without a tear? or upon its unruly Adverſaries without a Sigh for its protection? O let thy accuſtomed Mercy ſtop the wildeſt Boar, and root out the moſt miſchievous Foxes that may deſtroy it. Thou haſt founded it upon a Rock, no ſtorms ſhall ruine it, and haſt pla-

placed it on high to be ſeen and approach'd by all; let us not blindly turn out of the way, or fall into precipices for want of knowing guides. Let not thy Oracles become dumb for want of Prieſts; or the glad tidings of our peace be turned to ſilence, for want of faithful Meſſengers; but thou, O Lord, both ſupply defects, and reform abuſes that ſenſibly creep in: forgive the Zeal of thoſe, they know not what they do.

Let the Light of thy countenance graciouſly diſpel that darkneſs and confuſion wherein we lie Eclipſed. Then ſhall we ſing and praiſe thy Power.

Matth. ch. 2. v. 10.

And when they saw the Star, they rejoyced with exceeding great Joy.

COuld a Star become such a welcom object to Astrologers, whose eyes had contracted an acquaintance with the Spheres, and taught the Planets to become familiar? Or was it the appearance of a new-born Light that crowned their Joy. That Stars should become Guides, and not only Light, but Lead me too; 'twas indeed a wonder they never saw before, and which no Astronomer besides themselves, though never so Celestial, could yet parallel.

Had *Aristotle* known this, he would have made the Stars the Deities of the Spheres, and not pearcht Intelligences at their backs to roul them. This was some living splendour,

dour, ſure, that could both ſhine and ſhew the way. A Luminary more quickning than that Giant-one that ſpreads the Morn, and carries Time within his Arms. And they whoſe ruder Devotion, whoſe Idolatry taught them to adore the Sun, could not but religiouſly ſalute the Herald of a brighter one they came to worſhip.

See how Pagans foot it from the Eaſt, and chearfully make it but a walk from the remoteſt Climate to come and worſhip a Redeemer; while ſome will ſcarce travel from their Chambers to preſent a cheaper offering of Gratitude than this. They counted it the beſt journey they ever made, and for a teſtimony of their joy preſented Offerings, the richeſt their Countries yielded, and made the Inne their Temple, to pay the tribute of their adoration in, to the Lord of Glory; whilſt ſome ſacrilegiouſly ſtrip him of his Divinity for the greater honour of his name.

They had but a ſingle Star to guide them, but we can ſhew multitudes of new Lights to darken the Goſpel, troops of quaking comets, the Apparition of whoſe zealous and fiery aſpects, would rather fright than lead the way.

Thus pretended Illuminations of our own making, do not embrighten, but eclipſe Religion; and inſtead of opening blind us more: It was a real not affrighted Luminary that ſteer'd the wiſe men here, who triumph'd to behold that day which we ſtudy to forget. If they were not Kings, yet their very Fortunes would have made them Illuſtrious: Never had Travellers before ſo ſplendid a Convoy, ſo bright a Guide.

The Heavens proclaim thy Glory, O Lord, and the Firmament reveals the excellence of thy wiſdom. 'Twas fit that thou who haſt cloathed the world with Light, and enricht it with ſo many rowling Mirrors, ſhouldſt

ſhouldſt have one to be the Herald of thy Nativity. All the Creatures, even with delight, obey thy will; whilſt we rebelliouſly ſtop our ears to the harmony of thy Law. The wiſe men had no ſooner notice of thy Birth, but they grew angry with Time it ſelf, till they began their journey; and, that they might be ſure not to loſe their way, thou ſenteſt out a Convoy: a Star becomes an Evangeliſt, and runs poſt to guide them. So fortunate are good motions when they are put in practice, they that would ſeek thee, ſhall not want means to find thee, though it be by miracle. Thou canſt ſteer us by a brighter luſtre than that of a Star, even the Illuminations of thy Grace and Spirit.

Philip. Chap. 4. v. 12.

I know both how to abound and to ſuffer need.

DIvineſt Saint! how few beſides thy ſelf have learnt it? 'Tis a Leſſon the world hath long ago put by; not ſo much becauſe 'tis ſo hard, as becauſe its unpleaſant.

Were the way to heaven but ſet with pleaſures for ſenſe to revell in, 'twould quickly become an open and an eaſie walk: were there no rubs, no tryals to be paſt thorough, who would not become a Saint? The Crown of Glory would be as common as a Garland; were there not one of Thorns to be worn firſt.

The world cares not for a Religion that carries neither pomp nor pleaſure with it, but inſtead of rich and high enjoyments preaches temperance and

and patience onely. Even ſome of them that pretend heaven moſt, would not willingly learn this, but abundantly provide for their better fortunes: and thoſe wants our Apoſtle learnt ſo nobly to ſuſtain, too many out of better devotion labour, not to know.

He that bids us ſeek heaven firſt, tells us, that to long for earthly enjoyments is a Heathens wiſh: For after all theſe things do the Gentiles ſeek. And ſhall Chriſtians live like heathens ſtill, and look no higher than the world? ſhall they that make eternity their ſphere ſit and rowle themſelves in the boſome of an under element, and poorly make the pleaſures of mortality their aime alone?

Was it for this, He that made the heavens bowed them and came down leaving his throne to bring us thither, that we ſhould lie and grovel in our phlegme for ever?

How vile and vain a Creature is that man, that wraps up his felicity in the dull enjoyments of this life, and ſtill reſigns himſelf to ſenſe alone? Tell me, O thou that ſwimmeſt in plenty and drowneſt heaven in oblivion, ſhould the luminaries put on their purple robe, and changing their luſtres, like bleeding Meteors turn their rayes into crimſon ſtreams; were the air now filled with blaſts of the laſt Trump ecchoing an approaching judgment; how prodigious would that change look, what vaſt and horrid affrightments would the memory of thy prophane and irreligious fullneſs then ſtrike and ſcare thee with? Alaſs the enjoyments of the world are ſo poor, that he which places his hopes in their fruition, will quickly find himſelf but an eternal Beggar, a miſerable Dives.

And yet ſuch is the ſanctity of the world, to laugh at religious poverty, and deride the exigencies of a pious life as an enemy to nature. He knows not

not the joys of an expected eternity, that thinks there is no felicity beyond this ſpan.

Did we but know the reward ſhall crown that the world calls Miſery, the happineſs that waits on the moſt ſuffering and dejected devotion, we ſhould triumph in our wants, be in love with hardſhip, and embrace even beggery with delight. We ſhould be content not onely to die but to live martyrs, rejoyce even in the loweſt ebb to win heaven, and cheerfully learn with the Apoſtle to want here, for that fulneſs which knows none hereafter.

And yet how hardly can we endure even the ſmalleſt trouble for thy ſake O Lord? So inſenſible are we of thy goodneſs, ſo forgetful of thy power, that we do not only in our wants accuſe and condemn thy Providence, but are ready even to turn infidels in our misfortunes. Make us therefore, O Lord, to ſee the vanity both of the world

world and our own hearts, that the pleaſures of it may neither drown, nor the croſſes of it deject our hope or diſcourage our obedience. Let that glory which thou haſt promiſed to thoſe that conquer the world for thy ſake, be ever in our eye; that ſo, in whatſoever condition we are in, we may ſtill be found crowned and triumphing in Faith.

Luke c. 19. v. 9.

This day is Salvation come to this Houſe.

NO wonder *Zachæus* then made ſuch haſte to come down, and quickly *forſook* the friendly branches at *ſuch News*. *He* whoſe ambition *climb'd* no *higher* than a *Sight* of Jeſus, was all tranſported at the *Honour* of *receiving Him*. Had he been *taller* perhaps, he had not been ſo happy; it was his *Littleneſs exalted* him,

him, and he who was not onely the *Loweſt*, but, perhaps, the *meaneſt* of the Company, for *his* fortune became the *Envy* of the *Multitude*.

He that dwells in everlaſting ſplendours, and treads the Heavens under, expoſed Himſelf to the *Courteſie* of the *World*, whoſe *Charity* was ſo *cold* that he muſt invite himſelf, and be beholding to a *Sinner* for *his entertainment*. Had the *Princes* of the World but known *Him*, they would have quickly ſure ſurrendred up their Thrones, and counted their palaces too poor a Lodging for the Lord of Glory. And the Vain Jews, whilſt they expect a *Meſſias* all in pomp, a Redeemer that ſhould come into the world in *Majeſty* and *triumph*, are become not ſo much the *relicks* as *ruines* of a *Nation*, a *wandring Monument* of prodigious *impiety* throughout the earth.

Stand ſtill, ye Monarchs of the World, and behold your Maker now *beneath* you: and if ye have not plac'd

plac'd all your happineſs in a Kingdom here, Learn *Humility* from ſo *Bleſt* a *Preſident.* He that came to *ſave Sinners* thought it no diſhonour to be in *their* Company; and, as it were to make amends for *his* entertainment, and to make *Zacheus* compleatly *happy* He tells him, This day is *Salvation* come to *this Houſe.*

A *reward* which none beſides *Himſelf* could *give*, and which he that *hath*, need never *fear* being *poor* again. Who would not welcome his *Saviour* on ſuch terms, and Sacrifice even all his *fortunes* at *once* to be ſo infinitely *repay'd*? We cannot make too much *proviſion* for our *happineſs*, nor *welcome Heaven at* too much charge. And yet how many are there of ſo ſparing a zeal; they will be at no *Expences* in their Worſhip, like the thrifty Diſciple; they will not go to the Coſt of Serving God Handſomely; How happy was *Zacheus*, whoſe *poor* habitation our Saviour pickt out beyond the reſt to *harbour* in, and Honour with his

his *preſence*: nor yet was ſo rich a Mercy confined to *him* alone, but extended to the whole World too; Every family may, if they will, ſhare in the ſame fortune, This day is Salvation come to every one.

Hear this then, whoever thou art that Sacrificeſt thy *Soul* to *any thing* but *Heaven*, that danceſt to the Muſick of the World, and *makeſt Eternity* a *Stranger* to thy thoughts. Canſt thou deny thy Saviour an admiſſion, or think it a trouble to leave the fooliſh *intereſts* of the World, and welcome the moſt *Holy* Jeſus. Behold the *Miſeries* of our *Natures* which will not be perſwaded to *become happy*, but ſuffer an immortal joy to be loſt for ever in embraces here.

Thou haſt brought us from Nothing, O Lord, that we might ſee thy Salvation; that we who might have been for ever without Thee, might through the Knowledge of Thy ſelf be made partakers of thy Glory.

Glory. O enliven us that we may give up our ſelves wholly to thy Service, and perpetually ſtudy to do ſomething to the Honour of thy Name, that we may not throw away thoſe Souls on the vanities of the world, which thou haſt given us for Thy ſelf, and to be employed in thy Service: but that, Sacrificing our Wills to thine, and our Lives to a perfect Love of Thee, we may find that joy which accompanies thy Grace here, and that Glory which knows no end or change hereafter in Thy preſence for ever more.

Matth. Chap. 13. v. 43.

Then ſhall the Righteous ſhine forth as the Sun, in the Kingdome of their Father.

WHo then would not be ambitious of ſo bright a change, to become purely Cœleſtial; to have his

his body turn'd into a Luminary, and every part transformed to luſtre? when man ſhall become not only a Living ſoul, but a living ſplendour too; and his immortal breath, in its re-union, inſtead of parts, find beams to quicken.

Hear this, ye blind admirers of the world, that look no higher than a Diadem, a purple robe, or ſome honourable trifle, and ſell your brighteſt inheritance for a ſplendid toy.

Hear this, ye Beauties, that carry charms of Luſtre in your faces, and think your eyes are not only ſphears but treaſuries of Light; whoſe attire Emulates the ſtars, and carries ſplendour with it; that wear your happineſs on your back, and count a ſilver vanity your Glory.

Hear this, whoever thou art that canſt dote on ſhadows, the flaſhes of a tranſitory pomp, and for a glorious Mortality bidſt adiew to heaven and an immortal bliſs. Couldſt thou put on a robe of Stars, or pull rayes from that

that Royal luminary that embrightens the world, they would be but gloomy ſplendours, bright obſcurities to that Glory that enwraps a Saint. The luſtre of the heavens is but an emblem of our own: the Prince of Planets that diſhevels his rays, and revels it in ſplendour, the great Magazine that ſtocks the world with light, is but a Curtain to that Tabernacle that ſhall inveſt us.

Our tombs are our wardrobes for heaven, and thoſe Chambers of death whoſe hangings are winding-ſheets overlaid with duſt, are the out-rooms that ſtrip us for our robe of immortality; the opening of our Graves is the beginning of our happineſs, and we are gather'd to our fathers that we may be gather'd to eternity.

If that Glimpſe which the Diſciples ſaw in the mount made them wiſh for three tabernacles or an eternal abode there, how ſhall the beauty of revealed Heaven, and the glory of an aſcended Saviour, raviſh us with deſires after its enjoy-

enjoyment? It was the Martyrs comfort amidſt their tortures, that though their members were in pieces, yet the hairs of their head were numbred. Wert thou bottomed in the ſeas depth, his power can buoy the up, if cruſted into the earths rubbiſh, he can abſtract and form thee a finer creature than ever thou wert. If *Peters* ſhadow could cure the ſick, how powerſul muſt He be who is *Peters* Glory? He whoſe name is in the book of Life, dies here but to be laid as it were in a Preſs, to be extracted a purer model for eternity.

Who then would not only deſpiſe the world, but welcome even miſery for ſo invaluable a reward, triumph in his greateſt eclipſe, and become cheerfull in the midſt of chains? He that knows the glory of his inheritance, will little value thoſe pleaſant trifles, thoſe rich nothings the world admires, the painted joys of an imaginary felicity: but, in nobler and Diviner expectations, prepares himſelf for

for that change which knows none; where he ſhall have nothing elſe to do but to live for ever, and be eternally received as once the Diſciple into the Boſome of his Saviour.

Thou didſt make us for thy ſelf, O Lord; and when we by our ſins and follies had for ever loſt thee, thou didſt reſtore us to thy ſelf again. that we might not be eternally deprived of thee, our only Good. O fill us with perpetual meditations of thy Love, let thoſe joys which are ſo much above our thoughts, be ever in them; let our inability to comprehend the happineſs of thy kingdom heighten the piety of our ambition after it more, that we may walk in ſome meaſure worthy of ſo Divine a purchaſe as heaven, and as thou haſt prepared it for us, do thou prepare us for it. Prepare us with all thoſe heavenly graces that may entitle us to it, and with all thoſe ſpiritual deſires that may make us breathe and long after it; that ſo our hearts

hearts being there before, we our ſelves may come after, and being tranſported in our deſires may be alſo in our perſons, to everlaſting enjoyments.

Luke ch. 18. v. 11.

The Phariſee ſtood up and prayed thus; God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, &c.

HOw ungratefully does the proud Phariſee thank Heaven? how ſtrangely hath Pride altered him? He that uſed to make long prayers, intends to be but ſhort now: *He ſtands up.* He comes not to pray, but to bray; not to adore God, but to commend himſelf. He is not in the humour of being very devout, being ſo taken up and raviſh'd with his own Graces, that he had ſcarce either the time or the patience to remember

member the Divine Author, whose goodness he would seem to acknowledge, but it is so coldly, 'twere better he were unthankful still. He exceeded other men indeed; for his impudence was superlative.

Had he known himself better, he would have been more thankful, and less proud.

How largely doth he urge heaven with his worth, but makes no Apology for his pride: he thanks God indeed, but 'tis in *transitu*, rather a complement than a Prayer, though it be a sin to worship Images, he thinks it none to be his own Idolater; and therefore dares present God with a Catalogue of his own merits. How perfectly hath the world learned his Lesson? How do the Catholick Pharisees pride themselves in a supererogatory Devotion, and think to climb Heaven by a Ladder of their own making; glorying in a superabundant piety, and triumphing in a meritorious excess, of doing even more than they need. How

How nimbly do our trembling Enthuſiaſts too follow their Leaders ſteps here, in a ſanctimonious pride, by a ſupercilious purity preſuming to reform the world, and new model it again; that Saint themſelves *Stylo novo*, and with the Phariſee, not only thank, but tell God plainly, they are not as other men: that raylingly proclaim themſelves the great light of the world, and in a pious Lunacy would new Goſpel it again, extravagantly proſcribing all Religions but their own. Theſe melancholly pretenders ſeclude themſelves from others, and by a ſullen Devotion, are become ſo ſtrangely divine, that they have almoſt loſt their humanity.

So that if the Phariſee was not as other men, yet theſe are as like the Phariſee as may be, having ſo exactly learn'd both his Nature and Religion.

So natural is it for us, O Lord, to

to be deluded even in our beſt performances; and (whilſt we vainly think our ſelves not only better than others, but good enough, in thy ſight) to be carried into preſumption. 'Tis Humility crowns all our Graces, and puts a Beauty on our Requeſts, whilſt the Confidence of our own Merits does not only deform, but ſeclude us from thee.

Teach us therefore with ſuch Gratitude to uſe thy Gifts, that we become not forgetful of our ſelves or Thee. Whilſt others pride themſelves in a meritorious Supererogation, let us endeavour humbly to confeſs and bewail our Imperfections. Let not a ſpiritual Pride ſeize upon our ſouls, ſo ſhall we be innocent from the Great Tranſgreſſion.

Rom.

Rom. ch. 6. v. 21.

For the end of thoſe things is Death.

WHo then would propoſe that for his happineſs which ſhall periſh with himſelf, whoſe end is not only Death, but Hell, and will deſtroy him not only now, but hereafter too. Indeed, were there no hope that our remains ſhould revive again, or the ruines of our frame riſe up to a finer ſhape, we might well drown our ſelves in enjoyments here, and fix our felicity in pleaſures. Every man might then without ſin become an Epicure, and he that could invent new faſhions of luxury, would not only be more ingenious, but more fortunate too. Morality would be all vice, and yet vice it ſelf no more a crime, but our felicity: not to be extravagant, then were a ſin againſt

Nature, and he that is moſt brutiſh, would be moſt rational. Law would then become an enemy to Humanity; there could be no Society but in confuſion; and in ſpight of policy (were there no Heaven, no Hell) we ſhould pleaſantly mingle to a Chaos, and obey no other Diſcipline than that of Riot. Every one might then turn Atheiſt without ſcandal; to be without God in the world, would be no miſsfortune; every man might be his own without Blaſphemy.

Could they that live, die like brutes too, and revive no more, the comfort of not being damned would be greater than the ſweets of ſin. But alas, he that dies now, muſt live again, that his life may be remembred; nor yet is it ſo much the fear of Death, as the horrours of a guilty Conſcience, the terrible preſages of a future eternity that ſcares the departing ſoul: The pangs of expiring Nature are nothing to thoſe ſtings; the memory of our crimes bring with them. The ſor-

rows

rows of the Grave, and our being here no more for ever, are joys to the miſeries that are to come.

Tell me thou that hugg'ſt the world then, and gropeſt for Paradiſe in a Grove of ſins, thou that makeſt earth thy treaſure, and wrappeſt up the riches of thy hopes in times boſom, or the encloſure of a ſpan; when thoſe bright and nimb'e guides of life, thy Eyes, ſhall grow weak with age, or weary with pain; when every Limb ſhall become an Object of ſorrow, and thoſe parts that were ſo officiouſly employed in ſin, ſhall become inſtruments of deſpair. When that delicious frame, that darling edifice, thy Body, ſhall by its tottering qualms and trembling convulſions affrighten its diſconſolate owner, how will the flaſhes of a future juſtice, and the terrors of thy end confound thee!

Can thoſe enjoyments that flattered away thy ſoul, reſtore it now? can thoſe pleaſures that ſtole Heaven from thee, recover it again? can thy

vanities aſſwage thy ſorrows, or the memory of thy ſins the miſery of thy end?

Where's that Muſick, whoſe Airs, like *Davids* Harp, might charm the cries of Conſcience, and by its ſtrains drop a harmony that might ſtill the trouble of thy anguiſht ſoul?

Where are thoſe Trophies thy ambition purchas'd at the eaſie rate as only ſinning for that Honour, for which thou haſt ſold Heaven? that Soveraignty for which thou becameſt a ſlave thy ſelf, and loſt the freedom of thy Soul? Cannot all thy Greatneſs raiſe thee up a little, and by a power once ſo much feared and applauded, reprieve thee from the Grave, or a more eternall priſon?

Where are thoſe treaſures thou ſoldeſt thy beſt inheritance for, whoſe raviſhing ſplendors took away thy ſight, and made thee blinder than themſelves? Can they neither bribe nor buy thy pardon? or will the Grave know no other Fee than ſo rich a Miſer? Where

Where are all thoſe diverſions that robb'd thee of thy Piety, and the thoughts of thy Maker? thoſe pleaſing vanities that took away all ſenſe of Heaven, and foreſight of thy end? Are all vaniſh'd to a Tomb, and an unwelcome period? are all thy jollities terminated in a Coffin, and no other object left to keep thee company but thy Crimes, and thoſe terrors thy guilt preſents?

Behold now then ye Lovers of the world more than of God, and ſee the picture of your end, thoſe ruines you have ſo ſmoothly built on. Try if all your imaginary felicities are proof againſt this ſhaft, or can ſecure you from this intruder, the ſingle Conqueror of the world, whoſe very priſon is but a reſerve for a worſe, and its execution here but a reprieve for a more laſting and yet living death. He that liv'd in pleaſures, muſt live in flames, and having revell'd it in ſin, riot it in tortures; and the miſery is, that wiſhing not to live, he can never die.

And yet how vain are our desires still after the world, O Lord? how soon, how smoothly are we led by the false and transitory pleasures of this life, from Thee? The wages of sin is death, and yet how foolishly do we prefer its service before thine, whose reward is life? the end of prophaneness is eternal ruine, and the pleasures of impiety period in confusion; and yet we sadly embrace the proffers of sin, before the Promises of thy Glory. Pity, O Lord, the frailties of our Natures, and forgive the irregularities of our lives; fill us with noble desires after Thee, that the vanities of the world may be our scorn, and thy Glory only our Ambition; that we may not for a present enjoyment in this life, lose the hopes and inheritance of a better.

Luke

Luke Chap. 15. v. 10.

There is joy in the preſence of the Angels of God, over one ſinner that repenteth.

SO great are the Concernments of an immortal Soul, that its recovery from the world ſets heaven in a triumph; and its return to its Maker is welcom'd back in Quires: the angels ſing his recantation, and rejoyce as if they themſelves were made happier by his converſion.

And yet is not the joy of Angels greater than that of the ſoul it ſelf: when it hath found and regain'd its Maker, its ſighs are turned into ſongs, and its tears to raptures, : each drop is not only counted and kept up, but turn'd into a ſtream of joy. His ſorrows are turn'd to conſolation, his troubles into peace, and the ſtorms of conſcience into calms of love.

Such are the fruits of a holy penitence, the happineſs of a religious contrition. He that went mourning all the day, and turned Anchoret for grief; whoſe life was a torment and the grave his fear, that deſired not to live and yet was affraid to die, is now transformed into ſweeter paſſions, and breathes nothing but the praiſes of his Deliverer.

See with what indignation he looks upon the world, whoſe embraces had ſo long impriſoned him, to whoſe falſe allurements, he had been ſo much a ſervant. Thoſe pleaſant trifles he once admired are now his contempt, and thoſe ſhadows of felicity he once ſo much purſued he hath now exchanged for more cœleſtial enjoyments and enduring pleaſures.

And indeed, Who that hath once truly taſted heaven can well relliſh the world again? whoſe choiceſt feaſts are worſe than an Egyptian diet to this Manna, and its largeſt road of pleaſure but a precipice to that way whoſe

whoſe narroweſt path carries freedom and felicity. He that hath once found the goodneſs of his Maker, and thoſe joys that flow from his ſervice, will ſacrifice himſelf in pious reſolves; and grieving that he was ſo long a ſtranger to his law, all tranſported, beg both pardon and ſupport.

Tell me, who can character the pleaſures of this new birth, the joys of a converted ſoul reſtored to heaven and his maker? He that feels it can expreſs it but in raptures, and ſilent ſigns, the ecchoes of his heart. Even the Angels here can ſing it only, not deſcribe it; and in Seraphick conſorts give us notice, not a copy of it.

Thus the heavens become harmonious, and the frame of nature that groaned under the diſorder of mans ſin, is again revived and ſet in tune by pardon. And no wonder if the creation feel a ſilent muſick in its limbs, when the Lord our Maker is not only the Author, but a partner in

this triumph proclaiming even his delight in ſuch happy renovations, and that he is beſt pleaſed when ſinners fly to the refuges of his mercy, and humbly beg the riches of that Grace and favour, which he onely can give, and which he never refuſes to them that ſeek him.

So infinitely good art thou, O Lord, that thou doſt not only invite but bring us to thy ſelf; and not only call but cauſe us to return. We know thou deſireſt not the death of a ſinner, having ſo freely ſacrificed thy Son for ſin; and that thou delighteſt in pardoning it, for thou haſt proclaimed thy ſelf ſo. Though thou didſt not ſpare thine Angels when they fell, yet in the riches of thy mercy thou haſt contrived a Redemption for our ſouls, even by the blood of Jeſus. Fill us with perpetual adorations of thy love, that thy goodneſs which is ſo ready to pardon ſin, may encourage us to beg it; and to continue

continue conſtant waiters on thee in thy worſhip here, till we are made companions of thoſe bleſt ſpirits hereafter that rejoyce in the recovery and ſalvation of a ſinner.

Matth. c. 6. v. 33.

But ſeek ye firſt the Kingdom of God, and his Righteouſneſs, and all theſe things ſhall be added unto you.

AND He that loved his Saviour would, no Queſtion, do it: but alas, that which ought to be the firſt is ſcarce the laſt of our thoughts, the leaſt and worſt of our performances.

Such Lovers are we of Heaven that we think it no ſin to ſerve our ſelves firſt, and make our Creatour wait the leiſure of our Devotion. Miſerable Creatures, whoſe Religion reaches no higher

higher than their bodies, for whose very Superfluities we ſtudy to provide, whilſt our brighter part lyes all naked and unthought of. Such ſtrangers are we even to our own ſouls, ſo inſenſible of the joys to come, that we look no higher than the World, and in ſphearing all our hopes within Mortality as if we had nothing durable beyond our breath, ſuffer Eternity to be forgotten. We cannot live without our Maker, and yet how do our lives neglect him? How eager, how ambitious after an enjoyment here, but carry not the ſmalleſt paſſion for his Glory. The jollities of the World ſwallow up all thoughts of Heaven, and in the pleaſures of ſenſe we can drown Immortality.

What is that we ſacrifice our ſelves to, but the hopes of a felicity? The very Pagans rather than want a Bliſs would fancy one in lovely ſhades, and place the triumphs of immortality in thoſe amorous walks, their Ghoſts ſhould revell in. And who can hope for

for Heaven that neglects it, or expect the joys of this Kingdom that looks not after it? Without Holineſs no man ſhall ſee God, and he cannot be Maſter of much Sanctity that prophanely loſes himſelf in ſin, and is a Stranger to that piety which can truly Enrich Him beyond all the treaſures of the moſt ſplendid and fortunate tranſgreſſion. How miſerable are they then whoſe pleaſures only divert them from their Maker, and have no other Apologie for their neglect of Heaven, than what ſin can make; that Court the World, and for a fading embrace exchange a Diadem of Bliſs, a Crown of Life. Were the whole World turn'd into a Seraglio of delight, and every region to an Arabia, could every field become a Paradice, and every object we meet, bring a Magazine of pleaſure with it; had we all the enjoyments this life can triumph in; yet we ſhould quickly find them, without God, but miſerable fruitions.

Is

Is there any thing dearer than our lives, and yet even these are of no value in respect of a better: the very exigencies of nature are trifles to the concernments of our Souls. It is better to starve, than die for ever and lose God; 'tis better to go naked than not to be cloathed with immortality; 'tis better we should want here, than hereafter that fulness which knows none.

And yet, How many are there that had rather lose Heaven than the World, pawn their Consciences sooner than want, and for a fortune sell away their very Christianity. How many make sin their study, and think it a credit to invent new methods of impiety; and are such carefull providers for Eternity, that they will be laboriously wicked; and for a profitable iniquity think it no loss to be thrivingly damn'd. Are there not nobler wayes of living than by losing our names and Souls at once? Is infidelity a preservative against misery?

ſery? and muſt we build our ſupports on the ruines of our faith? Piety makes no man poorer, nor does religion rob us of our enjoyments but makes them ſweeter. Our contentments are not leſſened but enlarged and lengthened by adoring the Giver, nor is he the further from, but the nearer to a bleſſing, that begins with Heaven, and prefers his Saviour before the World. Deſigns thus founded are not ever unfortunate, and he that plots for his Soul as well as his body, ſhall learn a policy will baffle the World, and non-plus its wiſeſt Generations; when after all his loſſes he ſhall find a reward richer than all the revenues of the Earth together.

And yet ſo inſenſible are we O Lord, both of thy Glory and our own felicity that we can entertain any thing with more pleaſure than the thoughts of an eternity, we can ſpend the allowance of our time in

ſin,

ſin, and ſacrifice even all our years to vice; but count a moment too long, too much to be employed in in thy ſervice: we can dwell and drown our ſelves in pleaſures, and think a few ſpare minutes a fair gift of time for our devotion. The treaſures of the world are a poor gain for the Morgage of a Soul, and the loſs of thy favour; even the richeſt enjoyments of this life, are but wretched contentments without Thee. Do thou therefore elevate our Souls, and withdraw them from theſe beggarly elements to purer and more celeſtial addreſſes: let thy Kingdome be, not our refuge only but our choice; and the pertect reſolution of our ſouls to deſpiſe the flatteries of the world, for that glory which nothing but our ſins can deprive us of: And as thou haſt made us for thy ſelf, O Lord, enable us to continue ſo, that as we have received all that we have from thy bounty, we may ſacrifice all our deſires

deſires to thy glory: knowing that as nothing in this life can make us happy without thee, ſo nothing can make him miſerable that hath Thy Kingdom for his Inheritance.

A Prayer.

O Lord, who inhabiteſt Eternity; Thou art exalted above all principalities and powers, Saints and Seraphims are raviſhed with thy Glory, Angels and Archangels adore thy Greatneſs, Holineſs and Honour wait upon thy Throne, the Scepter of thy Kingdom is an everlaſting Scepter, thou loveſt Righteouſneſs, and hateſt Iniquity; and therefore they that come before thee, muſt worſhip thee in Spirit and in Truth, if they would be either heard or received of Thee: We confeſs, we are not worthy to appear in thy preſence, that can preſent unto thee no other Offering, than ſinful and deformed Souls which

which deſerve no longer to be accounted thine; having loſt that purity and likeneſs which made them ſo.

We are not worthy to receive any more tenders of Mercy, that have ſo often deſpiſed it, nor to ſee what is the riches of thy Love, that have ſo unworthily preferred the trifles of this Life before the treaſures of thy Grace. Thou madeſt it the end of our Creation, that we ſhould glorifie thee; but we, of all thy Creatures, have leaſt performed it. That time which we ſhould have employed in adorning and devoting our Lives to thy Worſhip (which is our moſt rational and Religious Service) have we ſacrificed to Sin, and the Pleaſures of the world.

Thou art ſo infinitely good, that thou deſireſt but unfeigned Sorrow for Sin to excuſe it; and yet ſo miſerable and deeply guilty are we, that we cannot bring ſo much as humble and contrite Spirits to plead for our ſelves.

ſelves. Thou didſt ſo love the world, that thou ſenteſt thy Son to die for it: but we have ſo loved the world, that we have deſpiſed heaven and our Saviour, rejected the holy One whom thou haſt ſent, and by our unworthy lives diſhonoured that happy Name, whereby we are called thine, and intitled to thy Kingdom.

But though our ſins cry aloud for puniſhment, yet the voice of thine own Mercy, and our Saviours blood, begs more powerfully for pardon. O let his Sufferings be our reconciliation, his puniſhment for ſin our freedom from it; let the bitterneſs of thy wrath on him, be turned into the ſweetneſs of thy love to us, that his Croſs may be our triumph, and the merits of his paſſion the purchaſe of our peace; and grant that having obtained mercy, we may walk accordingly; that being bought for heaven, we may no more ſell our ſelves to ſin, nor prefer a few moments

ments of pleaſure before an eternity of joy.

Make us to conſider thoſe divine ties that bind us to ſerve thee, the infinite and abundant teſtimonies of thy love which invite our Gratitude, and that happineſs which is the reward of them that ſeek thee: O let not the motions of ſin be more powerful in us than the obligations of thy Grace, nor the pleaſures of this life of more value to us than the joyes that are to come. But make us to walk cheartully in that way which thou haſt ſet before us that our temptations may but ſtrengthen us more; that neither the Croſſes, nor yet the pleaſures of this life may be able to deject or drown our piety; but that in whatſoever condition we are, we may be ſtill found crowned and triumphing in Faith.

O thou infinite Goodneſs, teach us to adore thee with our whole heart, and to conform our lives unto thy Law with a perfect conſtancy.

Make

Make us to conſider that exceeding weight of Glory which thou haſt promiſed to thoſe that ſtrive to conquer the world for thy ſake. O let thoſe joys which are ſo much above our thoughts, be ever in them; let our inability to comprehend the happineſs of thy Kingdom, heighten the piety of our Ambition after it more: that the greater thy goodneſs is, the greater may our deſire after it be, the greater thy love, the greater our obedience, and the leſſer our deſerts, the greater our humility.

Make us to ſee the little uſe, but the great vanity of this world, that ſo the pleaſures of it may not ſteal away our hearts from the contemplation of a better; but that our lives may be a perfect and perpetual Sacrifice of Obedience, ever pleaſing in thy eyes. O let thy ſervice be ever moſt delightful to us, that we may labour to improve our ſelves before thee, by our inward and only deſires after thee; that whatever defects attend

attend our Actions, this may be inſeparable in us, even to fear thy Name. That ſo leading holy lives here, we may lead happy and heavenly lives hereafter; and being filled with Righteouſneſs, we may be filled with Glory, and poſſeſs joys unſpeakable for evermore.

A Penitential Prayer.

THe fleſh evermore rebelleth againſt the Spirit in me, O my God; and the infirmities of my nature are too ſtrong for me of my ſelf to conquer. Behold how my frailties fight againſt my ſoul, and have wounded me before thee. O ſhall my ſins be ſtronger than thy Grace, and the errours of my life more powerful than thy Law? The pious incenſe of a contrite ſpirit is a Sacrifice thou doſt not uſually deſpiſe; and O that I could exhale my ſelf in ſhowers, and drop away my ſoul in tears, that my iniquities could fly away in ſighs, and the guilt of my life be wip'd off in religious ſtreams. Pity my Irregularities, O Lord, and forgive my Crimes: how long ſhall I groan

groan under the bondage of ſin, and weary thee too with the burden of my corruptions. Thou delighteſt to pardon ſin, and ſhall mine remain? Thou deſireſt not the death of thy Creatures, and ſhall I be forſaken? I cannot live without thee, nor enjoy the comfort of my very being till thou revive me: 'tis better I had not been, than that I ſhould loſe thee: and 'tis better I ſhould be no more for ever, than not regain and find thee. Return, O thou comfort of my ſoul, and fill me with thy love. Purge the ſtains and waſh away the blemiſhes of my life by thine own blood, renew and quicken my ſpirit with the joys of thine. Sanctifie my will with a pleaſing obedience unto thine, let the merits of my Saviours Righteouſneſs beautifie my Soul, cloathing me with innocence and purity of heart here, and everlaſting immortality in thy Kingdom hereafter.

A Prayer of Thanksgiving.

MY dear and glorious Maker, what ſhall I render unto thee for all thy Mercies? There hath not a moment of my life paſt by, without being made happy to me by ſome token of thy Love. Thou didſt puriſie my Birth by Baptiſm, I was no ſooner come into the world, but thou didſt ſeal me for Heaven, taking away the guilt which no innocency but that of Jeſus could conceal or pardon; and aboliſhing thoſe characters of ſin and death, which were ſo inſeparably imprinted on my nature, that no Law but that of thy Spirit could wipe away; and having brought me into the

the boſom of thine own Spouſe, and plac'd me amongſt thy Children, haſt fed me with continual mercies and means of Grace: that I might ſee there hath been no defect in thy Goodneſs, but my Acknowledgments, nor in thy promiſes, but my performances. And indeed, my God, I cannot look upon theſe obligations without horrour for my ingratitude, nor remember theſe precious teſtimonies of thy Love without a religious confuſion of ſoul for my great neglect and forgetfulneſs of thee. Nor can I plead an excuſe in the weakneſs of Nature only; for thoſe ſins I have been too willing a Committer of. And yet, my God, behold how thou haſt loved me, ſending thy Son to reconcile me to thy ſelf, that I might find acceſs unto thy Throne, and inherit the joys of thy Kingdom. Behold how thou haſt loved me in reprieving me from that wrath my ſins have

long ago deſerved; and as if thou didſt not or wouldſt not take notice of my crimes, haſt made me an object of thy Care, and an Example of thy Love, abounding in perpetual diſpenſations of mercy to my Soul. I will therefore ſacrifice my ſelf, O Lord, in praiſes to thy Name, and in the memory of thy Goodneſs, keep an everlaſting Jubilee in my Soul; thou haſt ſhewn me the way unto thy Self, and that in thee only are hid all the Treaſures of my Happineſs. I will be no longer then a Servant to the World, and beſtow the nobler addreſſes of my Soul on periſhing and empty nothings; and for a poor fugitive drop here below, loſe Thee the Ocean of Bliſs and Glory. And that I may deſpiſe the Flatteries of the world, O Lord, do thou inſpire me with deſires after thee only, and enable me to do ſomething for thy ſake, who haſt done ſo much

to

to make me happy; that ſo my Life may be a Sacrifice of Obedience ever pleaſing in thy Eyes.

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